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Foundations of INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

VOLUME I

R. M. Matthijs Cornelissen
Girishwar Misra
Suneet Varma

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FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Volume 1

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Foundations of Indian Psychology

Volume 1

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R. M. Matthijs Cornelissen
Girishwar Misra
Suneet Varma

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Preface

Karan Singh

Apart from its other achievements, the ancient Indian civilization undertook the most profound examination of the human mind that has ever been attempted anywhere. The entire process of yoga, particularly the system based on Patanjali's Yogasutras, developed a methodology for 'stilling the modifications of the mind'. The Bhagavad Gita also contains specific instructions for stilling the mind, and thereby accessing the deeper reaches of our psyche. Indian psychology therefore has a firm base and a profound underlying philosophy.

Due largely to centuries of Western domination, we have tended to be unduly influenced by the West, even in the area of psychology. This is not in any way to denigrate the great breakthroughs of Western psychology, particularly those of Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung. Indeed, post-Jungian psychology, especially Transpersonal Psychology, which has developed in recent years in California and around the world, are welcome efforts to delve deeper into the mysteries of the mind. What is really needed is a creative fusion between the Indian psychological traditions and the newer Western methodologies.

As they do in so many other areas, Sri Aurobindo's writings throw a flood of light upon various elements connected with the quest for the inner light. He has used *Vedic* symbolism to postulate a highly original interpretation, which places Indian psychology at the heart of the entire study. It is important that Indian insights become part of mainstream psychology around the world, and not be treated merely as an esoteric phenomenon.

The editors of *Foundations of Indian psychology* deserve warm commendations for having brought together a broad and rich spectrum of articles dealing with various aspects of psychology, including social, psychological, educational, health and emotional dimensions. This book represents a valuable contribution to world psychological studies and will be of great value to students of psychology around the world. Recent research on the brain and the mind-brain relationship has thrown fascinating light upon how the human mind functions. Indian psychology, of course, goes beyond the mind into what we would call the spiritual centre of our being. The co-relation of these various elements and dimensions represent a fascinating field for study.

Living as we are in an age of great stress and tension, the psychological aspects of human welfare and individual happiness can no longer be neglected. I take great pleasure in recommending this book not only to professional psychologists, but also to the general reader interested in delving deeper into the marvels and mysteries of the human mind.

Acknowledgements

The list of people to whom we owe an immense gratitude begins early. In fact, it begins with the ancient *ṛṣis* who composed the beautiful verses of the *Ṛg Veda,* and it continues right into our present times through a long, uninterrupted lineage of *yogis*, poets, sages, philosophers and common men and women, who together developed the theory and practice on which Indian psychology is based.

Amongst our contemporaries, there are again too many great individuals to name all, but we would like to mention at least a few. The first who come to mind are no doubt the authors of the chapters in this book. They have not only borne with us during the long period of gestation *Foundations* took to come out, but they have also contributed in many other ways to the development of Indian psychology as a science. Then there are the many others have not contributed directly to the text of *Foundations*, but who have worked for Indian psychology in other ways, whether by writing, research or the organization of seminars, workshops and conferences. We would like to mention, for example, George Mathews, Janak Pandey, S. Narayanan, Usha Ram, Indrani Sanyal, P. Krishna Rao, Krishna Mohan, Sonali Bhatt Marwaha, Ramana Kumar Kanuri, H. R. Nagendra and his colleagues at SVYASA, and in Pondicherry A. S. Dalal, Panch Ramalingam, Soumitra Basu, Larry Seidlitz and Ananda Reddy, but there are so many others.

Special mention need be made of Kireet Joshi, who in the early years of this century gave his unstinting moral and financial support to the development of Indian psychology as the then Chairman of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research. Similarly, we are grateful to K. Ramakrishna Rao, who personally and in his many official capacities has made a unique contribution to the development of Indian psychology. During the last ten years, the ICPR and ICSSR have enabled almost every seminar related to Indian psychology in India. In this connection we also want to express our gratitude to Rajiv Malhotra and the Infinity Foundation.

Finally there are those at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the Indian Psychology Institute who have helped with the production of the two volumes: Neeltje Huppes, without whose continuous support the book might not have come out at all, Vladimir Iatsenko who provided us with the Glossary, and Lynn Crawford, Divya Parasher and Jyoti Dalal who proofread and typeset the texts. We owe a similar gratitude to the staff of Pearson Education and to the many others who by their interest, silent support or hard work have helped with the development of Indian psychology and the production of *Foundations of Indian psychology*.

We are grateful to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust for giving us permission to use quotations from Sri Aurobindo's writings in *Foundations of Indian Psychology*.

Introduction

R. M. Matthijs Cornelissen
Girishwar Misra
Suneet Varma

What do we mean by Indian psychology?

By Indian psychology we mean an approach to psychology that is based on ideas and practices that developed over thousands of years within the Indian subcontinent. In other words, we use the word 'Indian' to indicate and honour the *origin* of this approach to psychology—the origin of the underlying philosophy, the conceptual framework, the methods of enquiry, and the technology of consciousness that it uses to bring about psychological change and transformation. It may be useful to make explicit that we do not use the word 'Indian' to localize or limit the *scope* of this approach to psychology; we do not mean, for example, 'the psychology of the Indian people', or 'psychology as taught at Indian universities'. We hold that Indian psychology as a meta-theory and as an extensive body of related theories and practices has something essential and unique to contribute to the global civilization as a whole.

It may also be useful to make explicit that this volume is not about the past, but about the present and the future. You will look in vain for chapters about the history of Indian philosophy or religion as they developed over the ages. Many such texts are already available, but this is not one of them. This volume has contributions that demonstrate how ideas and practices from the Indian tradition can be used to tackle issues in contemporary psychology and constructively inform its disciplinary practice by helping theory building and application.

Psychology as taught at present, all over the world, is still amazingly unicultural. This is rather remarkable if we consider the intensity and ease of international communications, and the fact that it is almost half a century since the political decolonization of Asia and Africa was completed. Though the large component of European and American thought in psychology is understandable historically, it is not any longer excusable. For it is not that the rest of the world has not thought about human nature, and it is definitely not that contemporary psychology has found the one and only correct way of doing so. In this context, one could argue that Indian psychology will be relevant particularly to Asian, African, or Latin-American countries which share alternative non-Western world views about mind, psyche and various psychological phenomena such as healing, health, self, or personality; but we strongly believe that in spite of all cultural differences, there is a large common core to human nature, and that, to the extent that Indian

psychology deals with that common core, it should be of interest to all members of the human family.

In short, we do not look at Indian psychology as something that belongs only to India or the past, but as a rich source of psychological insight and know-how that can be utilised to create a better future for the whole of humanity.

What the Indian civilization can contribute to psychology

The unique contribution which the Indian civilization can make to modern psychology can be looked at as consisting of three distinct elements—a sophisticated and well-worked out, psychology-based meta-theoretical framework, a wide repertoire of psychological practices, and a rich treasury of psychological theories. These three are, obviously, closely interconnected, and it may be clear that none of them can be fully understood without a fairly complete understanding of the other two. Yet, as language is inevitably linear, we will give here a separate short introduction to each of them.

A psychology-friendly meta-theoretical framework

The first major contribution the Indian civilization can make to psychology is a psychology-friendly meta-theoretical framework. To delineate the underlying theory, the basic 'paradigm' of the Indian tradition is, of course, a pretentious undertaking fraught with possibilities of error. The Indian civilization is immensely complex, and, given the abundance of different—often contrary—voices it harbours within itself, it is hard to state anything about it that cannot be contradicted with a striking counter-example. And yet, it is useful to give it a try, for the simple reason that without this background it is impossible to fully understand its psychological practices and its theories.

When one looks at the Indian civilization as it developed over the ages, it becomes quickly clear that within it there exists such a huge variety of distinct cultural traditions, that one may doubt whether it actually makes sense to speak of a single Indian tradition and whether it would not be more accurate to speak of Indian traditions in the plural. The doubt is understandable, but we would contend that in case of the Indian tradition, singularity and multiformity are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A rich variety of expressions does not preclude the possibility of a common thread, a single foundation supporting the variety, and we are inclined to think that especially in India such a common core indeed does exist. In fact, the idea of a single truth supporting a variety of manifestations is itself one of the core-characteristics of the deep view of reality that underlies the whole wide gamut of Indian traditions. One of the most-often-quoted aphorisms expressing this acknowledgment of divergent views in spite of a single underlying reality is probably: *ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*, which means, 'the truth is One, but the wise call it by different names'. An interesting aspect of this saying is that the differences are not described as errors: it is the wise that give different names to the one truth. Moreover, one would miss the point if one were to take this saying

as no more than a polite exhortation for religious tolerance. It rests on a deep, psychological understanding of the human condition, which says that reality as it really is, will always remain beyond our limited mental capacity to grasp, and that each individual can perceive of that reality only as much as their individual capacity and inclination will allow.

There is another ancient saying which goes a step further. It deals with the different perceptions that arise from affirmative and agnostic approaches to reality. It says—and one can immediately see how close some ancient Indian thinkers came to postmodern constructivism—that not only the name we give to an experience, but even the experience itself is determined by our 'set'. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.6.1), for instance, says, *asann eva sa bhavati, asad brahmeti veda cet, asti brahmeti ced veda, santam enaṁ tato viduḥ*, meaning, 'whoever envisages it as existence becomes (or realizes) it as existence, and whoever envisages it as non-being becomes (or realizes) that non-existence'. It may be noted that in the Indian tradition such differences are not attributed only to the different cultural priming; they are attributed primarily to the different type, level and quality of the internal state of the observer. And this brings us to what might well be described as the most important difference between the Indian and the Western paradigm.

The differences

Western psychology is largely confined to two dimensions which are both fully accessible to the ordinary waking consciousness—the physical and the social. Genetics, neurophysiology and the cognitive sciences are typical for sub-disciplines with a focus on the physical dimension, and the various offshoots of psychoanalysis, social constructivism and cross-cultural psychology could be considered typical for those who focus on social factors. Between the two, there is still, in spite of many attempts at 'softening' psychology, a widespread tendency to take the physical dimension more seriously than the social. Even within the field of consciousness studies, the existence of physical reality tends to be taken for granted, while the ontological 'reality' of consciousness and subjective experience is open for discussion. Their apparent existence needs some kind of justification, and both are commonly considered epiphenomenal products of material processes. Related to this, in terms of epistemology, the ordinary waking consciousness is considered the only acceptable state for the researcher to be in, and a clear rational mind is taken as the ultimate arbiter of truth. In fact, non-ordinary states of awareness are primarily associated with drugs and somewhat frivolous new-age activities. Finally, in terms of practical methodology, objectivity is taken as the ultimate ideal, and first-person, subjective observations are taken seriously only if they are embedded in statistics and third-person objective measures to counteract their inherent weaknesses. Obviously all this is a simplification and there are exceptions to this pattern—one could, for example, think of phenomenology—but still, a strong physicalist bias, an absolute faith in the ordinary waking consciousness and a total reliance on objective methods are so much part of mainstream

psychology that amongst psychologists, they are commonly considered indispensable elements of the scientific method.

The intellectual tradition of India starts from radically different assumptions. Ontologically, the most fundamental reality is not matter, but spirit; or more precisely, the indivisible unity of *saccidānanda*, of absolute existence, consciousness and delight. In other words, the Indian tradition includes psychological phenomena like consciousness and joy as core-elements of reality, and in fact it takes not physics, but 'knowledge of the self' (*adhyātma-vidyā*) as the fundamental science. Accordingly, the possibility and cosmic importance of an absolutely silent, transcendent consciousness are hardly ever doubted, while there are major schools of thought that do doubt the importance and even the reality of the material pole of existence. While Western science has come to terms with the fact that there are many different types of physical energies and substances, of which some are not directly perceptible by the human senses, the Indian tradition takes it for granted that there are also various types and levels of non-physical existence—entire inner 'worlds' which are not directly perceptible to the ordinary waking consciousness, but that are ontologically as real, or even more real than the ordinary physical world. These non-physical realities are considered to be intermediate planes of conscious existence between the absolute, silent consciousness of the transcendent and the apparent unconsciousness of matter. As a result, physical and social factors are accepted as part of causal networks, but not as the full story—events are thought to be influenced by a wide variety of forces that include factors belonging to non-physical realities. Similarly, epistemologically, a rational mind is appreciated and cultivated, but it is understood that there are higher sources of knowledge and the possibility of a direct, intuitive apprehension of truth. Finally, objective, sense-based knowledge is considered a minor form of knowledge (or even ignorance, *avidyā*) and an immense collective effort has gone into the development of processes that can make us more open to the subtle worlds, and especially to the pre-existing inner knowledge, *vidyā*.

It may be clear that these two basic views of reality lead to a very different sense of what psychology is about, how it is to be conducted, and what can be expected from it. For those under the influence of the physicalist worldview, psychology deals either with outer behaviour or with mental processes that happen within the neuro-physiological apparatus of individual human beings; even those who stress social influences, tacitly assume that such influences are transferred by physical means. It is taken for granted that consciousness, whether individually or socially determined, depends on working neural systems. Non-physical realities are illusionary and parapsychological phenomena are 'anomalous'. For an eternal soul there is no place (except as a belief of others, not as an 'objective' reality that exists in itself). Methodologically, one has to rely on statistics and sophisticated third-person methods of research. In terms of application, one aims at (behaviourally verifiable) changes in others.

For those under the influence of the Indian system, consciousness is primary. It is taken to be all-pervasive, and as existing within space and time, as well as

beyond both. The borders of the individual are porous, and the individual consciousness is found to extend through space and time, to others, to all kinds of inner worlds, and even to what is beyond all manifestation. As a result, non-physical realities and parapsychological phenomena fit perfectly within this explanatory framework, and there is no difficulty accepting an eternal soul as our real self. For research in Indian psychology, sophisticated first person methods are the natural first choice. In terms of application, Indian psychology aims primarily at the mastery and transformation of oneself.

When one lists these differences in this manner, the two systems seem to belong to different worlds, and not only serious misunderstandings, but even a certain mutual distrust appears almost inevitable. Historically this has indeed been the case. In the Indian tradition, right from the *Upaniṣads* and the stories of the *Purāṇas*, the basic ontological and epistemological assumptions of modern psychology are looked at as beginners' errors, remnants of an ordinary, naive way of looking at the world that stand in the way of a deeper understanding of how the human mind, consciousness in general, and even the physical reality actually work. Seen from the other side, from the perspective of mainstream psychology, giving up its positivist, constructivist, or agnostic assumptions looks like a return to a superstitious past, a giving up of the most valuable accomplishments of the European Enlightenment, a recipe for disaster.

Roads to reconciliation

There are several factors that may, however, help to overcome these difficulties. The first is that the inability of modern science to deal effectively with non-physical realities and 'the divine', may not be intrinsic to science as such. Future generations, who are likely to have a more globally informed cultural background, may ascribe this inability largely to the vagaries of European history. It might well be found that in the early years of modern science, Europe left these inner realms aside, not because it is intrinsically too difficult to research them in an intelligent and open-minded manner, but simply because they were too encrusted in the religious environment of the time. It is true that neither alchemy, nor the later efforts of parapsychology have led to sufficiently concrete results to convince the sceptics; but that might well be because their studies were hampered on the one side by the lack of a sufficiently supportive philosophical framework, and on the other by their failure to develop effective powers within the inner realms they purported to study.

As we will try to present in this volume, the Indian tradition might be able to provide both. Though the Indian civilization has had its own difficulties—800 years of foreign interference not the least of them—such a dramatic split between the physical and the inner domains is not part of the Indian story. In fact, the social structures and mental attitudes supporting spiritual pursuits in India are much closer to those of European science than to those of European religion. Even Śaṅkara—who arguably comes closest to what in the Christian tradition would have been called a church-father, given his role in founding centres of

religious authority and power—in the end puts personal experience (*anubhava*) above tradition. In his *Bhagavad Gītā Bhāṣya* he says, for example (18, 66), 'Even a hundred scriptural passages will not become authoritative when they, for instance, announce that fire is cool or dark' (Rao, 1979, p. 65). The methods of yoga and meditation are nowadays primarily looked at soteriologically, that is, as a means for salvation, as a means to arrive at *samādhi* or *nirvāṇa*—at least if they are not seen as a means to arrive at physical health and the survival of a corporate lifestyle. In the culture of origin, however, they are part of a coherent knowledge system and they are clearly looked at as a way to arrive at reliable knowledge. This is most clear in the case of *jñānayoga* (the yoga of knowledge); but one can easily discern elements of the pursuit of truth even in *karma-* and *bhaktiyoga* (the paths of works and devotion), which also, in their own way, have methods to reduce the distortions of perception and affect that are part of the ordinary human consciousness.

The good news then is that modern scientific and ancient Indian approaches to psychology may not be so much contradictory as complementary. It is true that they are based on different ontological and epistemological assumptions, that they use different methods, and to some extent, that they look at different sides of the human enterprise, but in the end, they are based on the same human urge for true knowledge, pure love, effective power and happiness. It may not be easy to come to mutual respect and understanding, but the effort will be worth it, for our preoccupation with knowledge and power in the physical domain has not solved humanity's problems. On a global scale, suffering due to poverty, violence and disease is still rampant, and we have added a considerable risk of sudden environmental self-destruction. One could well argue that the one thing we need most at present is a more comprehensive understanding of our own nature. As editors of this volume, we would like to argue that Indian psychology can make a valuable contribution to that endeavour.

Psychological practices

According to a survey commissioned by the *Yoga Journal*, there were in February 2008, some 15.8 million practitioners of (*haṭha*) yoga in the USA alone, and amongst the rest of the adult population, another 8 per cent, or eighteen million people, were 'very or extremely interested in yoga'. Over the years, thousands of researches on yoga and meditation have been conducted (Murphy & Donovan, 1997; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006), but according to the latter, this research is as yet rather imbalanced. Most research is conducted with beginning practitioners, and the vast majority of researches have been carried out with not more than three basic techniques—*haṭhayoga, vipassana* and Transcendental Meditation (TM). Almost all research is, moreover, in a mode that cultural anthropologists would call *etic,* rather than *emic*. In other words, the research is done from an outsider's, rather than from an insider's perspective; the techniques are decontextualized, and their effectiveness is measured in terms that belong to the theoretical framework of mainstream psychology. This is in itself not surprising, for measurement involves

the use of standards, and in science these standards have to come from previously conducted research. But the result is that the effects of yoga and meditation have been measured almost exclusively on variables like blood pressure, anxiety, depression and extroversion, which have little to do with what would have been considered relevant in the culture of origin, such as equanimity, compassion, wisdom and detachment.

While reflecting on the scope of existing research on yoga and meditation, there is another issue that warrants careful consideration. It is true that India has developed an astounding variety of structured methods to 'do' yoga and meditation. There can also be no doubt that it is worth studying these techniques, and that one should not do this only by etic, but also, or even especially, by emic approaches. The methods of yoga should be understood on their own terms, and ideally not only in their gross 'effectiveness' but in terms of the underlying spiritual and psychological processes. But even a sympathetic, insider's look at these techniques will not give us the whole story. Amongst the Indian psychological practices that could benefit humanity, there are not only such formalised methods and techniques, but there is also an implicit, informal know-how that is orally transmitted from teacher to student within the *guru–śiṣya paramparā (the master–disciple relationship)*, or passed down from generation to generation in the form of social institutions, customs, and culturally prescribed—but individually adopted and adapted—attitudes and inner gestures. When we look at yoga not only as a way to find the Divine but also as a way to bring our entire life more in harmony with the highest we can conceive and experientially 'realise', then it becomes clear why these informal, implicit aspects of yoga play such a big role in the Indian civilization, and why they are so interesting for modern psychology. An anecdote from E. Richard Sorenson (2008) may illustrate the point. Sorensen relates an experience he had in a Tibetan monastery where most of the monks were young, and where he had noticed earlier that the novices were always 'eagerly rushing to share whatever special tidbit [*sic*] might have come their way (whether material or ideational)' (p. 46). As he relates:

> One day, while having lunch with a group of novices, a burst of mirth snared my attention. An adolescent novice had just selected, as if solely for himself, the largest apple off a plate. Bursts of laughter from the others, no verbal comment, just hilarity, as several then did much the same, usually with some special fillip or perspective of their own. There was no obligation to be either different or the same ... they were just nuzzling at a trait all had seen outside.

The interesting part is that amongst these youngsters, there were no pejorative remarks or outbursts of self-righteous indignation. Egoism was for them not something natural and tempting, yet socially unacceptable, but an utterly hilarious trait they had so far noticed only in the behaviour of people outside their own community. Presuming there is no major genetic difference in such matters, it is clearly worthwhile to study what it is exactly that made sharing the natural baseline for

these children. It seems extremely unlikely that such a fundamental difference can be brought about by formal exercises or explicit instructions.

Regarding the spiritual core of the Indian psychological tradition, there is amongst professional psychologists a similar tendency to focus on formal practices and specialised techniques. Yet, in the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali, the undisputed authority on *rājayoga*, only one of its many *ślokas* deals with *āsanas* (yogic postures), and the *Bhagavad Gītā* hardly mentions strongly structured practices at all. Even in our times, some of the greatest sages of modern India, like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sai Baba of Shirdi, Ramana Maharshi and Sri Aurobindo, did not advocate the use of highly structured and formalized techniques at all. They worked instead through a focussed, specialized application of—in itself quite simple—psychological processes and powers. There is an enormous variety of those, and even though all the great gurus had their own favourites—for example, Ramakrishna's absolute devotion to the Divine Mother, or Ramana's sustained and unremitting focus on the question, 'Who am I?'—they typically adjusted their method of teaching to the needs of each disciple at any given moment.

The literature contains many different lists of desirable inner attitudes and gestures. Typical examples might be: a silent, non-judgemental self-observation; a growing surrender to the highest one can conceive; a sustained aspiration towards the Divine (whether in terms of knowledge, work, love, or oneness); a systematic development of traits like equanimity, calm, patience, vigilance, kindness, compassion, love, joy, harmony, oneness, wideness; small inner gestures of self-giving, consecration, openness, silence, surrender; the relocation of the centre of one's consciousness inwards and upwards. As yet, it is hard to say with certainty, whether such non-sectarian, informal 'paths' will dominate the future of Indian psychology, or the more formalized 'techniques' that have played such a big role in the preservation of the tradition into the present. What seems clear to us is that there is an urgent need for research in both.

Psychological theories

Indian psychology has dealt with most areas in which mainstream psychology is interested, and in many of them it has something unique to add. As we will see, there is a special, common quality to the contributions it can make to all these different fields. If we start with the structure of the personality—as we do in the first volume of Foundations—then we find that the Indian tradition has developed the concept of ahaṁkāra, which stands somewhere in between the Western concepts of ego and self-concept. But besides this egoic centre, which belongs to the ordinary waking consciousness, the Indian tradition has also developed a detailed nomenclature for many other, more subtle and non-egoic centres of consciousness; and it has even worked out, especially in certain Buddhist schools, how a consciousness can exist without any centre whatsoever. Similarly, the Indian tradition has found below the surface of our waking consciousness not only the dark 'unconscious' that depth psychology has explored, but a whole range of subtle kośas or layers of consciousness, that each have their own characteristic

nature. It has even worked out many different ways of 'realizing' in one's experience (or perhaps one should rather say, in one's being) a Transcendent beyond all nature. It has found that all these inner layers, types, and centres of conscious existence have their specific influences on the surface personality, and that a direct access to them can, with sufficient training, enable levels of freedom, peace, joy, compassion, and understanding much beyond what is possible in the ordinary waking state.

In the field of cognition, we see a similar pattern. On the one hand, there is a detailed theoretical understanding of ordinary, sense-based cognition, mostly described as a system of *pramāṇa*, or knowledge-producing events. Different schools developed somewhat different theories about these matters—and they made much of their differences—but there is actually quite a large common base. It is noteworthy that the philosophical school of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, which specialised in issues of epistemology and methodology, came to conclusions that are similar to modern thought in many respects. However, just as we saw in the field of Self and Personality, the ordinary sense-based cognition was not enough for the Indian tradition, and it developed besides a detailed understanding of intuition, inspiration, revelation, and various other types of 'intuitive knowledge' for which there are not always equivalent terms in English. The sheer complexity of the terminology, the subtle but significant differences between the various terms, and the stress on concrete methods to develop and refine these various forms of intuitive knowledge may give an idea not only of the enthusiasm and energy with which these possibilities have been explored, but also of the rigour, precision and attention for detail with which this work was undertaken. The study, cultivation and perfection of these subtle, not sense-based forms of cognition, might well deserve to become one of the major thrust areas of Indian psychology, as their development may lead to the creation of appropriate research methodologies for a whole new field of psychology.

Another major area of interest in psychology is that of emotion and motivation. To fully understand the various Indian theories of emotion, one has to go back to what should perhaps count as one of the greatest discoveries of the Indian tradition—the idea that the nature of ultimate reality can be described as an indivisible unity of *Sat, Cit* and *Ānanda*, or Existence, Consciousness, and Delight. While in mainstream psychology, it is generally presumed that happiness is dependent on the satisfaction of individual needs and desires, this theory asserts that delight is inherent in existence, even though it can be clouded in humans by their 'ignorance' (*avidyā*). In other words, suffering is attributed to ego-bound deformations and limitations of the over-individualized human consciousness. Seen from this angle, the satisfaction of desires may give temporary relief, but the road to lasting and unconditional happiness and wisdom runs through detachment from the ego, and a rediscovery of one's knowledge of, love for, and oneness with the ultimate reality. With the ideal of perfect detachment and complete equanimity, a series of intriguing questions arises, which have occupied some of the best minds in Indian history, regarding the possibility of action for someone who has

completely overcome all desire, preference and attachment. If such 'unmotivated' action is possible—and most schools of Indian thought agree that it is—then what kind of action can that be?

In the field of emotion, a special place deserves to be given to the ideas of Bharata (400–200 BCE) on aesthetic enjoyment. Bharata starts with the fascinating question, why people enjoy watching tragic plays in spite of the fact that they already know beforehand that watching such plays will make them cry. Considering the emotions that spectators and actors suffer and savour, he arrives at the subtle theory of *rasa*, the basic 'taste', which triggers the original delight hidden in all things.

It is commonly held, especially amongst American authors (for example, Walsh & Shapiro, 2006) that there are several areas of psychology where the Indian tradition has little to contribute. Though this is in itself perfectly plausible, it does not hold for the most commonly quoted examples. In all four areas where Walsh and Shapiro, for example, think that 'the meditative traditions' have little to contribute—child-development, psychodynamics, psychopathology and psycho-pharmacology—there is in fact detailed theoretical knowledge available within Āyurvedic and Siddha literature. In all four fields, the Indian tradition has paid attention to very similar social and physical factors as are taken into account in Western psychology; but there is, besides, an additional interest in influences on more subtle planes. In child-development, for example, influences from previous lives and the unique 'soul-quality' of the child, the *svabhāva*, are acknowledged as major contributors to the child's character and development. A similar multilevel understanding is part of the Indian way of looking at psychopathology, and the developmental stages later in life—the four *āśramas*. The misconception that there is no Indian contribution to any of these fields, is in all likelihood due to the same peculiar way in which Western psychology has studied the Indian tradition that we mentioned earlier. Mainstream academics have either looked at the decontextualized techniques of yoga and meditation, or at the other extreme, at equally decontextualized philosophical systems. The surrounding culture, as actually practiced, and the mediating theories—which are both very well developed in India—have so far not received the attention they deserve.

Indian psychology applied

Psychology is very much an applied science; and fields like pedagogy, education, social work, human resource development, organisational behaviour and therapy can all be looked at as specialized fields of applied psychology. At present, practitioners in these fields often experience a certain tension between the official theory, which prescribes well-defined, explicit methods and procedures, and experience, which tells them that a more personalized, eclectic and intuitive approach works better. The informal experience seems to come closer to reality than the formal theory. Interestingly, there is substantial statistical evidence to support this view. Bruce Wampold (2001), for example, has collected massive meta-analytical

data to show that hardly any of the efficacy in psychotherapy can be ascribed to specific methods and theories. According to his findings, the efficacy in therapy is almost entirely determined by factors that either belong to the environment in which the therapy takes place or that are internal to the therapist and the client. While this is hard to understand from within the medical model that is used in most mainstream therapy research, it is in full harmony with Indian psychology, where the focus is on the work people have to do on themselves. The guide—whether he plays the role of pedagogue, teacher, human resource professional or therapist—guides by example, and perhaps even by direct influence. He shows that growing up is both worthwhile and feasible; that difficult material can be learned; that it is possible to master complex social situations in a constructive manner; and that life's problems can be solved. In a very deep sense, the guide guides mainly by sharing who he is in the essence of his being and how he expresses that essence in his life. In many forms of therapy-training this is recognized, and undergoing therapy oneself is then an essential part of the training-process. But in Indian psychology, which is built on self-knowledge rather than on knowledge of statistically generalized others, the demand for self-work, for understanding and mastering one's own self, goes further—both in breadth and in depth. In breadth, because it extends to all fields of applied psychology, and in depth because a good guide is supposed to show that it is possible, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, to 'transcend and integrate': A good guide should be able to show that it is possible to go beyond one's limitations; to live from a higher consciousness; to act from less selfish motives; to work more in harmony with the whole.

The practical application of Indian psychology differs from present-day mainstream psychology in a manner that parallels the differences we found in the various areas of theory formation. There is on the one hand the same constant attention to the multidimensional nature of the personality—a multidimensionality that is not limited to the physical and the social, but that extends to, or rather starts with, the spiritual. And there is on the other hand, a constant awareness that each individual is ultimately unique. Both attention points come together in the important concepts of *svabhāva* and *svadharma*—the recognition that individuals have not only their own true nature, their own unique set of qualities, but also their own truth of action, their own rules of conduct. Both concepts are based on the underlying sense that the individual is not just a cluster of self-concepts and tendencies to behave according to pre-established patterns, but a spiritual being, a soul who has taken birth for a definite purpose, a purpose which it has to find and fulfil.

One book in two volumes: Some concluding remarks

Indian psychology as such is as old as history; and in a technical sense, even older than written history, given that there are indications of a long oral tradition before the first texts were ever written down. But Indian psychology as a branch of modern science is a new field, which is as yet truly in its infancy. Our attempt to use

the treasures of the Indian tradition for contemporary problems is relatively new and in that sense we are pioneering a new effort. The editors and contributors to this book make no claims on being accomplished yogis; they are ordinary scholars and professionals who have tried to see what various ideas and practices from the Indian tradition can contribute to some major issues in contemporary psychology. The different chapters are records of such attempts; most are exploratory in nature and not the outcome of a long, well-established tradition of research. What is more, this book looks at the Indian tradition as a knowledge system in its own right, and tries to see whether its ideas and its practices have the potential to complement and enrich modern science not only in terms of content, theory-construction and practical application, but even in basic research methodology. As said in the beginning of this introduction, this book would like to open up issues like these to a wider discussion.

Foundations of Indian psychology has been divided into two volumes. The first volume clarifies the basic 'Theories and concepts' of Indian psychology and its first section deals with the social and philosophical context. It delineates what Indian psychology actually is, and then, in the second chapter, describes how the academic science of psychology developed in modern India. The third and fourth chapters take us back into India's hoary past: they give us a glimpse of the psychological wisdom hidden behind the symbolic language of the *Ṛg Veda*, the oldest and most respected of all Indian scriptures. The last two chapters of this section offer two different perspectives on the post-modern methodological and social global environment in which Indian psychology is presently re-discovering itself. The other three sections of this first volume deal with the same major issues that modern, mainstream psychology deals with: the first is on self and personality; the second on research methods and cognition; the third on emotion, volition and motivation. But there is one big difference: as we have indicated at the very beginning of this introduction, Indian psychology is rooted in a consciousness-based, spiritual, yet secular and life-affirming tradition, and each chapter of these three sections tries in its own way to see what spirituality and a consciousness-based understanding of reality can contribute to our modern understanding of the human mind and its possibilities for further development.

The second volume, 'Practical applications', shows the deep and wholesome changes that the use of Indian psychology can make in the applied fields of health and healing, education and society. The first section here deals with health and healing and takes us, after a short, concept-packed philosophical introduction, from the application of *yoga* for integral health in one of India's best medical training hospitals in Delhi, via countryside temples and the practice of psychotherapy in an Indian *āśrama* and American suburbs, to a mental health clinic in the ancient city of Varanasi. In the second section, on education, three different perspectives are offered, those of Sri Aurobindo, Āyurveda and Krishnamurti, and the various chapters deal with the education of children as well as their teachers. The last chapter gives a detailed picture of a radical experiment in 'free progress' education. The third section takes us again to a wide variety of

physical and social settings: youngsters trying to survive Delhi corporate life; old people recovering from the devastation of an earthquake; whole villages fighting the onslaught of modern commercialism on their Himalayan forests; the role of traditional motherhood in bringing up children; the Sikh way of life; and introducing secular spirituality in the Indian army. As a whole, the second volume is testimony to an immense collective goodwill and a strong aspiration for a better, more humane society, for which Indian psychology has many valuable contributions to make.

It may be clear that, though the two volumes of Foundations of Indian Psychology stand on their own and can be studied independently, they do belong together: One's understanding of the practical applications of Indian psychology will be immensely enriched by the study of the first volume, which provides the theoretical foundation on which the practices described in the second, are based. Similarly, reading in the second volume how professionals use Indian psychology in their daily work with 'real people' in actual, modern-day settings, offers a much needed concrete body to the theoretical aspects of Indian psychology, which might otherwise run the risk of looking self-centred, speculative, and, indeed, 'theoretical'. So we, as editors of these two volumes, can only hope that you, as their reader, whether you start with the first, or with the second volume, will be inspired to study the other volume as well, for it is bound to complete and enrich the total picture.

Both volumes give, each in their own way, an indication of the treasures that are awaiting us if we take the trouble of exploring psychology from the perspective of the Indian tradition. There is much to learn from the scriptures and practices that are still available in India. There is far more to explore if we follow the methods and acquire the attitude that gave the ancient sages their deep insight into life and human nature, and if we take their path further towards the future. The forward march of humanity has not come to a close; there is much still to be done, and to fulfil our destiny, exploring the outer world objectively is not enough. We also have to explore the possibly greater mysteries of our inner life, and for this further adventure, the Indian tradition provides us with an amazingly solid and sophisticated basis. It would be utter folly not to make use of it. The basic theoretical and methodological foundations of Indian psychology are sound and they have a tremendous potential to enhance the quality and wholesomeness of psychological research and practice. We hope that this book may inspire many others to get involved and take this attempt further.

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The psychological perspectives of our times… Three shifts of a rhythm

Aster Patel

As one looks within at the 'existential' position of one's being, one discovers that one is living in three distinct shifts in the psychological perspectives of our times. Time-shifts that overlap at moments, seem almost to converge and yet remain distant from reaching the 'totality' they strive for! We shall present these perspectives at some significant points of their own progression, without forcing an attempt to arrive at a comfortable-seeming conclusion!

At this stage of our journey, distinctions are needed to better understand the routes we have to follow to arrive at our destination—a collective destination for man in his effort to understand himself and arrive at his fullest potential of growth.

I

- In the Western tradition, the quest for knowledge has been marked by the Aristotelian classification of the various disciplines—which required that they be pursued in their distinctiveness and isolation one from the other—as the greatest virtue lay in rendering distinct in identity, form and function

  Thus, from the sixteenth century onward, the analytic and reductionist method of enquiry came to the fore in a kind of absolute way—to delve into the secrets of nature and to unravel her operations. And to so recombine their mechanisms as to suit the purposes of man.
- The results arrived at were so stupendous that it came to be believed that this was the method *par excellence* for all investigation, for any pursuit of knowledge.

  Not only for the study of natural phenomena, where the success was all too evident, but this was also the method to be applied to the study of psychological and social phenomena—to man and society.
- Its first application to the study of man in modern times took the form of behaviourism, in which personality was seen in terms of the traits of behaviour, which could be the object of observation and interpretation.
- However, the focus shifted, in course of time, to internal subjective

factors with the need to look into causes of abnormal behaviour, which was the work to which Freud devoted himself—and developed the practice of psycho-analysis.

- In order to set right the abnormalities of behaviour, it was found that in bringing to light the causes of such behaviour, a certain 'integration' of the personality took place as a consequent result.

  This fact of integration of the personality became for Jung, his successor, the most significant line of pursuit. How does integration take place? He arrived at the conclusion that there exists a deep-seated 'centre' in human personality, which exercises the function of integrating the disparate elements of the personality by attracting them to itself like a 'magnet'. He added that he was led to posit the existence of such a centre in personality by the results that could be observed when a cure took place. But that he had personally no direct experience of its existence such as would serve conclusively as evidence. But, he went on to say, that the yogīs in India had a personal experience of it.
- There was no reversal of this perspective of psychology in the West. It came to be accepted that there are deeper levels of consciousness in the human person—other than the observable traits of behaviour—which are subliminal and subconscious, both at an individual dimension and at a racial and archetypal one.
- Our times are witness to this steady stream of exploration which has culminated in the 'Transpersonal' seeking for ranges of consciousness that are higher than the ones we habitually possess—in extent, quality and function.
- How far can the analytic and reductionist method go, one that we are accustomed to applying in all our investigations—this is one of the burning questions that loom large on man's horizon. Has it begun to redefine its contours to seize the greater realities it is confronted with? Can it do so at all? Does man have to look for a new method altogether? Has such a method existed and been practiced, with good result, in other cultures and civilizations? A host of pressing questions form the search-list of these times! And the sense of urgency that accompanies them mounts with the hour!

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- Parallel to this development in the perspective of psychology, the physicist, in applying the analytic and reductionist method to the study of 'matter', arrives at radical results, which reverse all previous findings.

  He set out to disengage 'parts', so as to study them in their distinctiveness and thus arrive at a knowledge of the sum of the parts, in the form of 'aggregates'.

But he begins to find that the parts do not exist in their separateness—he is in the presence of 'wholes' as primary realities, that are organic and dynamic, and are present in each of the 'parts' and determine their character and function. Thus creating a structure and inter-linking of the 'parts' within the 'whole', with the 'whole' present in each of the 'parts'.

- No discovery could have been more revolutionary! One that is irreversible in nature. A new departure in the further quest for knowledge is inevitable. Another ground is laid and to proceed farther, another methodology is needed.

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Two momentous consequences follow:

- If the physicist can discover the presence of 'wholes' in his study of matter by an analytic and reductionist method, then a very significant change must already have taken place in the perceiving consciousness of man to enable him to do so.
- Further, this discovery has made it possible for him to create an entirely new range of technology—one by which we live and function today and which brings the world, nay, the universe itself, in a close-knit, web-like formation of a rhythmic and dynamic action. This technology finds itself in a cycle of progressive and accelerated innovation.

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- Consequent to these findings and the resultant technology, the ancient Aristotelian scheme of knowledge of the separateness of disciplines remains altered. Each discipline not only cuts into the edge of many others but none is complete unto itself without the others.
- A new view of the universe expands the horizon. A 'wholistic' universe in which the inter-connectedness of structures 'within the whole' becomes the very basis of all its functioning. In such a universe, the pathways to knowledge amid the sciences themselves, as also amid the arts, connect, coalesce and mingle in a networking pattern of proximity and reciprocal meanings.
- The scheme of disciplines, in the West today, stands changed—with new nomenclatures reflecting unified and complex lines of endeavour. There is hardly a discipline that does not move into other zones, overlapping territories and giving rise to new disciplines. The 'body' is identifiable but the frontiers are fluidic.

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- Man is faced with a serious question of methodology. Is the analytic and reductionist method of enquiry, which has stood him in such good stead so far, able to sustain the journey into these other horizons that open wide their vistas before him? Whether in his study of matter—or, of the human personality? He explores afresh, within his own cultural moorings or in other cultures elsewhere, with which he has today become familiar.
- For the forces that gather momentum day by day with a striking rapidity are of the nature of a wide networking configuration—whether in international dealings, in economic structures, in communication and information, in movements of ideas and cultural interchange, in societal patterns. A sense of a vast web of the collective, as primary reality, prevails!
- The West has come a long way from its early moorings—along a path well explored, till it has been led to a point, which was perhaps the least foreseen!

  It thus finds itself 'perched' on the experience that India has made of the universe—and the knowledge she has gathered along many routes and the methods that she has experimented with in her long, millennial history.

  It is a galvanizing moment in our contemporary times—when the West, sure of its methodology, needing none other for long, triumphant centuries, comes to a kind of standstill! Unsure of how to deal with the 'wholes' it has discovered, on the basis of an analytic, reductionist method. The question of a 'new' method, another 'basis' altogether of methodology is of critical urgency.

  It thus looks to other cultures, other civilizations which have made use of other methods—and to see if they correspond to present needs and situations.
- It is in vain, that people speak of a clash of civilizations. What we are living through is a moment of the 'complementarily' that cultures offer—or, even of their integration into a greater whole of culture in which mankind can participate and enrich itself. An 'integrative cycle' of knowledge and cultures is ours.

II

- What is the perspective in which the Indian spirit has sought knowledge of man, nature and the universe?

  The Indian spirit was imbued, since times immemorial, with a sense of three great intuitions:
  - Consciousness is the one all-pervasive fact of existence. All that is, is 'consciousness'. Consciousness self-possessed or cast in forms of

its own substance, to make real to itself its outline of objectivity. The dynamics of this act of creation is inherent in it—and the joy of expressiveness in form of being is its sole purpose. An inalienable absoluteness of joy—the joy of consciousness creating endlessly 'forms' from its own substance.

- All experience and knowledge flow from identification with this pervasive fact of conscious existence. To know That—by knowing which all is known.
- The way of knowing That is by a secret identity with It in the immediacy of one's consciousness. This is the one central way of knowing—by becoming That which is sought to be known. And since all existence is one and consciousness is the all-pervasive reality of this existence, man has only to fathom in himself the secrets of this consciousness and thus unravel the secrets of all existence.

- Thus the entire process of knowledge is a unitary fact and the way of knowing is to energize the consciousness-force in oneself and to become identified with the all-existent, so as to gain knowledge of its contents in their full range and extent.

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- A unique way of knowing—but, surely, the intimacy and certitude with which we know the contents of our conscious being has no parallel with other ways of knowing, which distance themselves from the subject and circle around it. Besides, this unique way of knowing has stood the test of millennia of history. It has been practiced, tested with the utmost scruple of rigour and subtlety, and has found corroboration through long centuries of persistent and arduous effort by a galaxy of individuals of varying types and approaches, who dedicated themselves to its working out and to recording the results obtained.

  No method could have been so meticulously experimented with over such an endless period of time as this one; and the confirmation of results arrived at so overwhelming. The method of the natural sciences—the analytic, reductionist one—has not had such a long history of practice.

- Thus the entire quest for experience, lived in consciousness, and the resultant knowledge arrived at, of both content and form, have been pursued essentially in a psychological perspective. A perspective of sounding the depths and ranges of consciousness in oneself and in the universe. And of doing so by a method deeply 'introspective', such as a deliberate plunge into the profundities of one's conscious being implies.

- The being of 'man' was thus central to this pursuit. What he is, what he holds secret within him as further possibility of growth in terms of

qualitatively higher levels of consciousness and how he can attain to them? These have always been the three clear goals of the abiding quest that marks the Indian psyche.

- In the light of these findings and the discovery of the truths of such psychological dynamics, it looked at all the structures of life and society. Be they of education and culture and human relationships, or the many sciences and arts of life, or the structures of economy, polity and governance. The ancient Indian psyche built up all these with an eye to the minutest detail and the method of practice—the sense of practice was essential and basic to all the rest—and recorded this knowledge in treatises which exist today, in addition to the living sense of continuity offered by the oral tradition.

  Implicit in the creation of these structures was the deep psychological perception that growth to qualitatively higher levels of being was an innate fact of man's existence—both for an individual and for society. The structures followed an evolving pattern, which could serve as steps to make such growth possible—for both the individual and the society. They were created with a sense of evolutionary purpose, which they were there to fulfil.

- What was the psychological understanding of the nature of man? And what were the structures of collective life, which served the purpose of growth?

There are a few essential perceptions that have stood the test of repeated experience through timeworn ages:

1. There are four-fold states of consciousness:
   - *jāgrat*, or the waking state;
   - *svapna*, or the dream-state;
   - *suṣupti*, or the dreamless state;
   - *turīya*, or the state of Samadhi, of the states beyond.
2. There are five *koṣas*, or sheaths, in the psychological being of man:
   - the *annamaya*—the food sheath, the body;
   - the *prāṇamaya*—the life sheath, the vital energy;
   - the *manomaya*—the mental sheath, the mind;
   - the *vijñānamaya*—the sheath of knowledge;
   - the *ānandamaya*—the sheath of bliss.
3. Each of these sheaths has, within itself, a range of levels in the quality and action of that formation of energy—from the lesser to the greater, the less conscious to the more conscious.
4. At the core of the being is a luminous centre, radiating joy—the *caitya puruṣa*.
5. The 'mind' itself, though characteristic of the human mould, is only one level of consciousness—and there is an entire gradation of levels superior to it in quality, action and range of possibility.

6. The total sum of energies in the personality is a subtle and complex poise and inter-penetration of the force of *sattva* (harmony), *rajas* (action) and *tamas* (inertia). One or the other can be the more dominant quality, though all are present everywhere. The dominance of a quality can be an evolving factor, making room for the other ones to take its place.
7. From the qualitative nature of the balance of energies that make this equipoise, that give to the individual his innate bent of character and line of spontaneous action, *svabhāva*—will follow the rightful law of his being, his movement towards truth in his characteristic manner of seeking, his *svadharma*. As is the man, so is his path of growth and action in life.
8. The status of being an individual enjoys—the *adhikārbheda*—which is his by 'right' is determined by the quality of consciousness and its range in the total gradation that forms the basis of the personality. The higher the quality, correspondingly will be the status to which he belongs in the hierarchy of beings. Such status is innate and self-existent—it is solely a fact of consciousness.

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Among the structures of collective life, which are built into the social existence of an individual, and which offer him the steps of a ladder for his own growth of consciousness, are:

1. The *varṇas*—the four types of actions which the society needs; and which are part of the individual's own law of growth, and are necessarily present in his own existence.
    - There is the *brāhmin*—the seeker after knowledge, who also imparts it to others.
    - The *kṣatriya*—the hero soul, who battles for the right and just and maintains law and order.
    - The *vaiśya*—who creates and produces so that life can continue its exchange of means and to fulfil her needs.
    - The *śūdra*—who works with his hands and feet and puts his body at the service of both the individual and the society.

    The human body itself—from the head to the feet—is symbolic of the functions that meet the needs of life. Like elsewhere, here too there is a sense of gradation, of levels of hierarchy that fulfil a just need without laying claim to domination of any kind.
2. The *āśramas*—the four stages of an individual's journey through life. Stages, which are like 'training grounds', as the term '*āśrama*' suggests. For, life is an evolving and enriching process and the psychological needs and the seeking for fulfilment changes with its progression.
    - There is the student period—the *brahmacarya*—in which all energies

are focused on acquiring knowledge. Knowledge of the sciences and the arts, practice of martial skills, body-building, character formation. And learning to serve the teachers, to learn from the example of their lives and personalities.
    - There is the *gṛhasthāśrama*. The period of the householder's life, of making one's place in society, of drinking deep at life's many founts, of marriage and children.
    - The stage of *vānaprastha*—when one's duty to society is done, one has relished the richness of life and one withdraws into the forest, into the heart of nature, to draw the essence of all the experience one has made and to share it with others.
    - The stage of *sannyāsa*—when even this activity is left behind and there is felt a need to prepare oneself for the journey that lies ahead, from one life to another. So that this movement too might become a conscious one, in awareness of the purpose of this round of many lives that is ours.

  Not everyone went through this complete cycle of growth, for many stopped mid-way. But the sense of progression and of discovering the full *rasa* of life and its ultimate fulfilment was built into these structures, by which man and society were given a direction which they could follow if they so chose.

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- But the fundamental psychological perspective in which the ancient Indian placed himself was that of the innate urge of man to transcend himself—to exceed his existing status of consciousness and to reach out to whatever lay ahead of him as a further possibility.

  To explore the nature of this urge to transcend himself and the furthest possibilities that this could lead to—this was the unique and abiding interest and preoccupation of the ancient Indian psyche, which remains vibrantly creative to our day.

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- This exploration was pursued along three lines, which formed part of a single quest:
    - First, to understand the human person by a deep and many-sided sounding of the full range of consciousness active in him—from the level of the conscious, and below that threshold, to the levels that lead the individual into circles of his universality; and those that are infinitely superior to his habitual poise, but are accessible to him in their vast transcendence.

- To unravel the dynamics of the normal operations of consciousness—at each of these levels, separately and in their reciprocal interactions—so as to seize hold of the secret springs of these operations that function with such minuteness of an intricate complexity in the totality of all that constitutes the conscious organism of man.
- Having discovered the secret of the dynamics of the operations of consciousness—and having sounded the possibility for each part and element of the psychological being of man to go beyond its existing range or limit to a greater one—the ancients in India set out to discover and experiment with a set of processes that were psycho-physical. These processes could take up either each of these parts in itself or all the parts together in the person taken as a whole, and see if the fact of change and transcendence could not be made a 'conscious process', pursued deliberately and by a willed effort at practice, through a sustained endeavour.

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- Thus were created the various *yogic* disciplines—each one often specializing in taking up one significant part of the human personality and entering deep into its complex functioning, re-combining its elements and opening them up to the action of forces of a higher order in order to effectuate changes in its own functioning. Such as the disciplines of *haṭha yoga*, *rāja yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, *karma yoga*, and many others.
- In the millennial history of this endeavour and experimentation, of which neither memory nor history offer an exact record of time, there were also attempts made to look at the personality as a whole. As a complex entity of many essential psychological elements or parts—and discover and experiment with processes that could take up the entire complexity of this psychological structuring and make an attempt to raise the 'whole' to a higher level of being and functioning.
- Such processes of growth were embodied in the *Vedas*, its form of *yogic* discipline, that of the *Tāntric* endeavour, the *yoga* set forth in the *Gītā*; and in our times in the lived experience of Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and in the creation and practice of the 'Integral Yoga' by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

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- We wish to observe here that this entire effort at the deepest level of exploration into the human psyche, the creation of psychological disciplines on that basis and their continued practice through unrecorded

time is a fact of the utmost significance in human history and for the future possibilities of man.

There is a parallel, of a different order, that draws one's attention. Since the sixteenth century in Europe, man has sought to unravel the secrets of the forces operating in nature and has made use of this knowledge to harness energies in new combinations to put at the service of man. The modern era of technology springs from such an effort.

The knowledge born of the practice of these ancient yogic disciplines—and the modern ones—could well be of inestimable value in creating a new future for man himself. This time, it is not another environment that is in question—but the being of man himself.

- It is equally significant to note that the Indian psyche has, generally speaking, a deep and abiding 'attraction' towards the pursuit of yoga, whichever discipline may be taken up by an individual. This attraction is natural to the flow of his being. Not only as a specialized pursuit to which one's life is dedicated, but all of life in its many aspects, and all the structures that have been created—offer a pathway of 'growth' for man's consciousness. This becomes evident if we carefully observe these structures which form the basis of the life of the collective, and the underlying truths which give body to this culture. Life itself is a yoga—a process of growth and transcendence of the psychological being of man. The paths have been explored, exact processes have been worked out, and there is the corroboration of results arrived at by centuries and centuries of continued practice. No scientific endeavour could ask for more!

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- In present times, Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have created a process of yoga know as the 'Integral Yoga'; and have experimented with it for almost a hundred years now. In their own beings, in the first instance—and then with a growing number of individuals round the world. This experience is gaining ground.

  In line with the traditions well worked out in India, they sounded the psychological being of man, identified the essential elements of existing yogic disciplines and unified the path of practice into a core of truth which would gather all the parts and elements of the being along a central axis of process and dynamics. With this central axis identified as a psychological process that is operative in the being, the rich complexity of the process, in its wealth of detail, finds its rightful bearing in the full range of human personality.

  The process of 'Integral Yoga' has a bearing not only on the individual in the entire range of his personality—but this range includes the presence

of the collective as a psychological force and reality. The two are mutually inseparable manifestations of the human race in its existential position; and in the entire unfolding of the evolutionary process on earth.

In fact, the process becomes co-terminus with that of an 'accelerated' evolution, which man can pursue consciously—in full awareness of the aim and of the processes of growth that lead to it.

- At the present moment, it is a self-exceeding of the 'mental' consciousness of man—of mind in its habitual operations—that marks our onward advance. An observation that we had occasion to make earlier.

  In the ranges of consciousness that lie beyond that of the mind and which man can attain to, there is a nodal level that Sri Aurobindo calls the 'Supermind'.

  He experiences it as the level in the scale of evolutionary progression where all dichotomies cease and a consciousness of the 'whole'—with its power of 'whole-willing', 'whole-feeling' and 'whole-action'—become accessible to him in one movement of his being.

  A level of consciousness—a supreme grade in the ascension of man—in which the all-pervasive Spirit reveals its secrets in Matter. And Matter reveals itself to us as being none other than the 'body' of the Spirit. Matter made of the Spirit's stuff—an essential 'whole' re-creating itself in the 'parts'.
- A veritable transformation of 'matter' is the aim that the process of 'Integral Yoga' offers to man. A transformation that unravels these great secrets and with the potency of its action, brings about corresponding changes in the psychological being of man, which is rooted in the material base of the 'body'. The changes it effects are far greater than those that technology brings about in his external environment.
- We find that we are coming a full circle in our onward march!

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But a few audacious questions loom ahead. Shall we try to formulate them?

1. Is the method and process of 'Integral Yoga' what contemporary man is looking for—as a means to transcend the mode of action innate to mind and to attain that of the 'supramental' level of consciousness? This knowledge is by 'identity', which can work directly with the 'contents' of consciousness. And since consciousness is the all-pervasive fact of existence, it can eventually work directly with all existence—even with all the forms of matter.
2. What then is the role of the analytic and reductionist method that seizes things from the 'outside', disengages 'parts' to get into the 'core' of matter?

3. Is there visible already—on the horizon—a zone where the 'subjective' and the 'objective' become one 'expanse of territory' and the two methods move into one complex process of being and becoming?

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- The questions are of great audacity—but our times are no ordinary ones! In raising these questions—we are possibly creating a clearing for the future.

III

- The third time-shift is in need of a new rhythm! For it is marked by ruptures but holds also very rich possibilities.

  The psychologist in the university circles in India is a soul who 'wanders'—in search of his moorings! The fact that he is looking for these moorings is, however, of great significance.
- By virtue of an alienated system of education in the country—set up in a different historical time—he is bereft of the psychological heritage to which he is rightfully heir.

  He has an inner awareness of this body of knowledge since the cultural patterns, of which he is a part, reflect this in a substantial measure. But, academically, he is nurtured on the perspectives of psychology that have taken shape in the Western world.

  If he looks at these ancient streams of experience that India offers, it is more often than not under an implicit compulsion to see them as 'additional perspectives' to the ones he has acquired and to force a synthesis of sorts. This is not how true knowledge can be arrived at.
- An attempt at mere juxtaposition does not meet the criteria set by science in its rigour for an experience that needs the test of corroboration.
- An urgent task awaits him. He needs to free himself—by a deep and wide psychological action—of 'perspectives' ingrained in him by such education. A putting aside of certain assumptions is called for.

  And, then, to immerse himself—almost literally, as in an ocean—in the cumulative energy of the body of experience that India holds and, even more so, in the grain of its practice. This latter fact is of the greatest value, for this gives to any psychologist his own field of direct experimentation.
- Once such an attempt is made, he will be in an authentic position to look afresh at what he has earlier put aside. And to see if these perspectives are complementary or can be integrated into a greater 'whole' of both knowledge and method.

- This is a unique responsibility that rests with the Indian psychologist. His innate capacity to sound the depths of the experience of consciousness that India has made is his to avail of. His familiarity with the method and the findings of the West are also there. He is in a position to create a new synthesis in times to come. A synthesis born of a *lived experience* of wholeness…

In sounding these psychological perspectives of our times, we find that they are present in our own conscious beings as so many dimensions—of space, time and history. We, of the third millennium, are no unidimensional beings—and we seem to draw all of the past and the present of mankind into one upward point of the spiral that pushes ahead towards the future… To rise up in one transcending movement that will succeed in crystallizing them into whatever the future holds as Totality…in the fullness of 'integration' such as the present evolutionary moment of the action of the Supermind seems to make possible. An action half–veiled—though palpable in our lives.

An action of our times…fulfilling itself.

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Section 1

The social and philosophical context

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Introduction

Indian psychology as an academic enterprise is inspired by a set of specific realizations about the nature, scope and methods of critical and comprehensive engagement with the human mind and its myriad manifestations. This enterprise, however, did not receive much attention from modern scholars engaged in the process of learning and teaching. In recent years, the academic scenario has started changing in many respects, and there are indications of a dialogue opening up with diverse cultures and knowledge traditions. In this context, it seems worthwhile to address some of the key aspects of the disciplinary matrix that have shaped the way the discipline has grown. Hence, before introducing the themes deliberated in the chapters of this section, it would be relevant to articulate some of these disciplinary developments.

To begin with, it may be noted that unlike in the physical sciences, the growth of the disciplines constituting the human sciences are conditioned by particular socio-cultural conditions and are directed towards the goals and ideals upheld by society at a given point of time. Ideological concerns, therefore, often predominate and inform the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions of the systems of inquiry. The conceptual tools, theories and perspectives of various disciplines often illustrate the cultural imprints on their agenda. The modern discipline of psychology emerged in Western Europe and North America, and subsequently proliferated in other parts of the world. In colonial India, academic psychology was introduced as a mere adaptation of psychology from the West. As such, it reflects an approach to psychology that is individual-centred, and that considers a person as a separate entity geared toward achieving control over the environment. This other-oriented psychology maintains a discontinuity between persons and their surroundings, which comprises many things, including other persons. Also, its assumptions are rooted in a mechanistic, objectivist, reductionist, deterministic and materialistic world-view. Adherence to such a perspective goes on unchallenged, even at the cost of ignoring substantive issues and confining inquiry to trivial issues. This entire enterprise is undertaken, sustained and widely shared on the mistaken premise that the physical sciences offer a prototype for doing a complete, culture-independent science.

Somehow, a collective amnesia is maintained by the community of academic psychologists, whereby it is forgotten that humans are simultaneously both subjects as well as objects. As conscious beings they constantly think and reflect about

themselves. They engage with creating reality in major ways. This kind of reflexivity is made possible due to the gift of language, which opens the doors of creativity and introduces elements of indeterminacy. Barring simple reflexes, most human actions and behaviours have an undeniable emergent quality and are based on meanings that are socially created, sustained and modified. This brings in a degree of complexity and uncertainty that is unmanageable within the received paradigm, one which is bound to the premises of the physical sciences. Overwhelmed by the early success of the physical sciences, psychologists preoccupy themselves with issues, even if they are trivial and obvious, that are amenable to the methods offered by the dictates of physical sciences.

The history of modern psychology tends to indicate that, but for a few exceptions, the vast majority of the psychology fraternity has seriously engaged in the pursuit of analysing psychological phenomena under the dominant assumption that reality is one—and that the psychological reality can be approached and analysed in line with the rules and procedures of the physical sciences. As a consequence, a sincere and vigorous endeavour is made to adopt the same strategies for the study of the psychological reality as are used for the physical reality. Thus quantification and objectification prevail and the adoption of analytic procedures helps in creating a scientific framework that puts forward physical science-like claims. Developments in psychophysical methods, psychometry and experimental designs reinforce the image of psychology as a science. The paradigmatic constraints do not receive the attention they deserve due to anticipated gains from emulating the physical sciences. In some important and essential ways, the discipline's journey has been a misguided one.

A closer scrutiny reveals that these scientistic efforts have not culminated in much success. Psychology has failed to achieve prediction or control of behaviour in the way physicists have been able to in certain domains. The findings have not been cumulative and the laws have limited generalizability and replicability. This has led to a rethinking about psychology and the moves undertaken have tried in different degrees to innovate and redress the discipline by bringing culture, language, ecology and spirituality into the disciplinary discourse.

The present section, 'The social and philosophical context', begins with K. R. Rao's chapter, 'Indian psychology: Implications and applications', in which he argues that unlike Western psychology which does not have an overarching theory encompassing the entire discipline, Indian psychology's approach is synthetic and holistic, so that it becomes possible to overcome dichotomies such as science and spirituality, the sacred and the secular, theory and practice, individual and society. At the same time, Indian psychology, broadly speaking, has applications ranging from individual transformation to conflict resolution at the societal level. Rao takes centrality of consciousness as the defining characteristic of Indian psychology, and goes on to delineate twelve principles which provide the outline for a model of Indian psychology. The realm of extra-ordinary human experience (including telepathy and the direct action of mind over matter), Rao elucidates, can be researched most thoroughly using the concepts, methods and models of Indian spiritual psychology.

The title of Ajit K. Dalal's chapter, 'A journey back to the roots: Psychology in India', alludes to the recent and renewed interest in models of psychology that have originated and developed in India over millennia. Dalal's chapter offers a comprehensive history of academic psychology from its inception in 1905 at Calcutta University as part of the Philosophy Department, to the contemporary emergence of the Indian psychology movement. The chapter is accurate and informative in that it provides details of academic psychology in India, in terms of the number of psychologists, universities and colleges offering psychology, details of associations formed by psychologists over the years, and a chronology of events of direct significance to academic psychology. But more than that, Dalal has been able to pin-point that the main reason why psychology has failed to develop as a discipline of national importance is that it is largely a Western import. Right from the beginning, psychologists have led a double life, in the sense that they subscribe to one kind of psychology in their professional lives (Western), but to another when it comes to their personal lives—for which they lean on the Indian textual tradition, and the psychology contained therein (for example, the *Bhagavad Gītā)*. As Dalal points out, academic psychology in India became more useful and relevant from the 1970s onwards, with a shift in focus to social problems, and more so in the 1980s when it was acknowledged that culture played a dominant role in the shaping of the psyche. Academic psychology in India is becoming increasingly more culture-sensitive and culturally rooted; and at the same time, the emergence of the Indian psychology movement, with its emphasis on the global relevance of systems such as Vedānta, Buddhism, Yoga and the more recent integral psychology of Sri Aurobindo, is also witnessed.

In 'Psychological ideas in the *Vedas* and their relevance to contemporary psychology', R. L. Kashyap expounds on the emphasis in the *Vedas* on an all-sided perfection of human life, and the modes of its realization. In the *Vedic* view, life is a journey from one peak of perfection to another. Kashyap indicates that the *Vedic* gods are supra-physical beings endowed with consciousness, knowledge and power, but without physical bodies. Thus Agni is the power of will endowed with wisdom, and Indra is the Divine mind which provides appropriate knowledge to human beings so that they may attain perfection in all their actions. Kashyap further notes, based on Sri Aurobindo's work, that *the Ṛg Veda* is poetry of a high order and its true meaning is concealed in its symbolism. Kashyap goes on to provide a list of proper nouns (names of *Vedic* gods), and the deeper meaning and significance concealed behind the symbolism.

Vladimir Iatsenko further expands 'On the *Vedic* Symbolism in the light of Sri Aurobindo', and attempts to recover the true meaning of the *Veda*, the possibility of heaven on earth, that is, to possess and live in that highest Divine consciousness here on earth. The *Vedic* view was one of transformation—invoking the higher powers by aspiration, and surrendering to them to bring about a transformation. This was the *Vedic* Sacrifice, and its aim was transformation of terrestrial existence.

In 'Beyond mind: The future of psychology as a science', Kundan Singh argues that true knowledge is attainable only by a shift in consciousness from a

lower to a higher level, and not by clever manipulations of concepts located in the mind. Kundan begins by exposing the limits of induction, the mainstay of the scientific method, and challenges the possibility of any true 'objectivity', largely on the ground that to the fact that our most basic tool of research, language, not only describes events, but also creates a cosmology, a worldview that influences the thought, behaviour and perception of the user. Leaning towards Eastern wisdom traditions, and basing his arguments largely on Madhyamika, Advaita Vedānta and Integral Yoga, Kundan then offers the view that mind is not the knower of things, but an object of knowledge. He holds that the truth of one's existence can only be found by identifying oneself with a higher consciousness beyond the mind.

John Pickering discusses the place of 'Indian psychological thought in the age of globalization'. He first looks at why Buddhism has been more widely received outside India as compared to other Indian systems, and he is of the view that Buddhist thought is richly comparable with contemporary Western thought. Pickering notes that a positive contribution of postmodernism is that it offers a pluralistic view on knowledge, whereby systems of psychology falling outside the purview of mainstream positivist psychology are given a fair hearing—thus leading to greater openness to Indian psychological thought. The author also examines how changes in the scientific worldview, after quantum physics established itself as the dominant paradigm, may also contribute to greater acceptance of Indian psychology. In closing, Pickering suggests that Indian psychological thought is more appropriately considered a world-view as well as a way of life, and that such a way of life appears to be a highly sustainable one.

Taken together, the chapters in this section offer a disciplinary context in which the present effort is situated. They provide not only a historical account of modern psychology, but also delineate a broader framework derived from *Vedic* and subsequent conceptualizations. The ensuing dialogue with other disciplines may lead to a more engaging, productive and fulfilling enterprise of psychology.

1

Indian psychology: Implications and applications

K. Ramakrishna Rao

Over the years, I have used two metaphors to describe the psychological content in classical Indian thought. Psychological insights in the Indian tradition are rich diamonds in the raw, buried deep in the ravines worn by philosophical streams and covered by issues and concerns extraneous to academic psychology. So they need to be mined and recovered by modern investigative tools, cut into contemporary categories, polished by concepts currently in vogue, and displayed dressed in fashionable discourse. Only then can we see their radiating natural brilliance and their many-sided splendour. In the second metaphor, classical Indian thought is a treasure trove of psychological thought, hidden in the thick forests of philosophical and religious texts, waiting to be harvested.

In a significant sense, the analytic approach of Western psychology is piecemeal. It is said that psychology, with some exceptions, has bits of theories relevant to specific areas such as perception and learning, but not an overarching theory encompassing the entire field. In the Indian tradition, however, the approach is synthetic and holistic. Its meta-theoretical postulates help to overcome dichotomies such as the sacred and the secular, spirituality and science, theory and practice, society and individual, reason and expereince. They help to build models for studying human nature in its totality and formulate comprehensive theories that apply to a wide variety of topics and issues. Therefore, I believe, Indian psychology has implications that are in a sense broader than psychology itself. It has potential for application to areas, which current Western approaches appear unable to address effectively. These include such vital concerns as conflict resolution at a social level, transformation at a personal level, and the widely held beliefs in spirituality and paranormal phenomena.

With the backdrop of classical Indian thought, it becomes possible to develop a meta-theory and unified models for psychological research. We hope that this exercise will contribute to the growth of the discipline appropriately called spiritual psychology, which has implications for bridging the science–spirituality divide. Science and religion are generally considered to be disparate and inconsistent, if

not conflicting, attempts at understanding reality. Our contention is that science and spirituality need not be so considered. In this chapter, I will present an outline of what I consider to be the major assumptions of a meta-theory of science and religion, important conceptual and methodological issues in studies of spirituality, the relevant implications of these assumptions for psychological theory and research, and possible areas of application.

Religion and spirituality

Spirituality and religion have gained a measure of respectability in recent years in academic discussions, thanks to the substantial literature that appears to connect them to health (George et al., 2002; Koenig et al., 2001). However, what the concepts 'spirituality' and 'religion' precisely mean is a matter of considerable controversy. For example, Koenig et al. (2001), in their *Handbook of Religion and Health*, call our attention to the difficulties involved in finding acceptable definitions for religion and spirituality. Pointing out the inadequacy of their dictionary definitions, they list several distinguishing characteristics of religion and spirituality (Table 1.1, p. 18). These include, first, that religion is community-focused, observable, measurable and objective, whereas spirituality is individualistic, less visible and measurable, and more subjective. Second, that religion is organized, behaviour-oriented, and involves outward practices. Spirituality, however, is less formal and systematic, and more inward directed. Characterizing religion as 'an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols', Koenig et al. (2001) regard spirituality as 'the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, about meaning, and about relationship to the sacred or transcendent…' (p. 18). They depict spirituality as the outer circle which includes various religions as inner circles (Figure 1.1, p. 19).

Others, like Teresa Woods and Gail Ironson (1999), also emphasize the public and private aspects of religion and spirituality. However, it is well known that William James (1902), among others, emphasized the private aspects of religion as well. It is suggested, therefore, that religion and spirituality are overlapping constructs. They exhibit some common characteristics and some non-shared features (Miller & Thoresen, 1999). According to Miller and Thoresen (1999), 'the field of religion is to spirituality as the field of medicine is to health' (p. 28). This view suggests that spirituality is an inner circle within the wider circle of religions, a view somewhat different from the one expressed by Koenig et al. (2001). Empirical studies of spirituality and religion have rarely made operational distinctions between the two. Again, to quote Miller and Thoresen (1999), 'almost all empirical studies to date have not recognized the distinctions … but instead have treated religiousness, religion, and spirituality as the same general concept' (p. 29). Further, they point out that 'with rare exceptions, the available literature has measured religious … rather than spiritual variables' (ibid.). The latter assertion may be an oversimplification, once we acknowledge that spirituality and religion are not sufficiently well distinguished for operational purposes.

Peter Hill and Kanneth Pargament (2003) point to the dangers of bifurcating religion and spirituality. They list four such dangers. (1) Manifestation of spirituality in all its forms occurs in a social context, and all organized religions address personal affairs. Therefore, the view that one addresses issues at the social and the other at a personal level is untenable. (2) There is a growing tendency to think that spirituality is good and religion is bad. There is no justification for such attributions as both have potentially beneficial and harmful sides. (3) For most people, the distinction between religion and spirituality does not exist. They have spiritual experiences in an organized religious context. (4) The polarization of the two concepts, spirituality and religion, 'may lead to needless duplication in concepts and measures' (p. 65). Hill and Pargament suggest that the sacred, which includes the divine and the transcendent, is 'the common denominator of religious and spiritual life' and spirituality is 'a search for the sacred, a process through which people seek to discover, hold on to, and, when necessary, transform whatever they hold sacred in their lives' (ibid.).

The definitional and operational ambiguities of religion and spirituality constructs spill over into the science–religion dialogue. Without a certain degree of clarity of the core concepts 'religion' and 'spirituality', the science–religion dialogue would be a non-starter. We believe that the spiritual traditions of India have something to offer in this context. There is a general consensus between the Indian and Western perspectives that the common ground between religion and spirituality is the sacred. The sacred may refer to different things such as god, divinity, ultimate reality and so on. The common denominator of all of them, it would seem, is transcendence. Transcendence implies going beyond what is given in one's normal sensory experience. In the spiritual traditions of India, whether Hindu or Buddhist, there is an overwhelming emphasis on transcendence as a state of being that goes well beyond sensory awareness. Spiritual pursuit is an exercise for transformation of the human condition to achieve transcendence. Spiritual psychology is dedicated to understanding this process. Thus, in the Indic traditions, spirituality is the quest and religions are the tools and technologies—first, to aid in that quest and, second, to apply the discoveries of the spiritual quest to life and living. *Spirituality is to religion what science is to technology*. Seen in this light, science and spirituality are two truth-seeking activities that seem to run parallel to each other.

Science and spirituality

From time immemorial, science and spirituality have been two important avenues of human endeavour. Search for truth is the goal of science as well as of spirituality. Their discoveries have had enormous influence on people across cultures and around the world. However, their relative roles and dominance have varied over time. It would seem that spiritual quest was the dominant force first. Today science clearly has the upper hand, even though spirituality does seem to play a major role in the personal lives of a majority of people. Again, the application of science and

spirituality has profoundly influenced human life all along. The discovery of truth, whether in the area of science or spirituality, quite often leads to development of technologies that affect our lives in a variety of ways. Technological development is not the exclusive province of science. Analogous developments take place in the sphere of spirituality as well. In a significant sense, religious practices are the offshoots of the application of spiritual discoveries.

Most of the time, science and spirituality have run as parallel quests. We are concerned at a given time with one or the other. Consequently, they are compartmentalized, considered in isolation, and pursued independently. However, when there is a simultaneous focus on the two for their unified understanding, problems arise in the form of truth conflicts. This in turn leads to the perception of one in opposition to the other. One then tends to pronounce a verdict from one perspective, however disconcerting it may be from another. The option of convenience is to keep science and spirituality as separate as possible and limit them to pre-circumscribed domains with impregnable walls built between them. Alternatively the tendency is to reject outright one in favour of the other. This is an unnatural arrangement, because both science and spirituality continue to affect our being and behaviour, whether or not we acknowledge it. An obvious casualty in the process is a meaningful dialogue between science and spirituality.

If the effects of science and spirituality on humans are genuine as believed, a dialogue between the two is not merely warranted, but necessary. This calls for a meta-theory aimed at the unification of science and spirituality, because a theory of science or spirituality alone is unlikely to facilitate a meaningful dialogue between them. The underlying perspective of such a theory should be one that does not pit science against spirituality, or vice versa, one that does not conceive either in opposition to the other, but postulates unity and complementarity between them, at perhaps a more profound level than is obvious to commonsense. In this context, spiritual psychology, which attempts to gain unified understanding of the transcendental and empirical domains of our existence and experience, appears to be the discipline that holds the key.

The basic postulates of a meta-theory embracing science and spirituality include the following. First, science and spirituality are two knowledge streams that spring from the human mind. The two streams are marked by their distinct epistemological contours. They travel through different terrains, but finally merge into the mother sea of consciousness. Second, emancipation of the human condition from the limiting constraints of ignorance and suffering to a state of happiness and well-being are the goals of both science and spirituality. These goals are pursued by different strategies and methodologies with varying degrees of success. However, success or failure is not confined to one domain or one methodological stance. Rather science is applicable to some areas of human concern, and spirituality appears to matter in some others. Scientific habit of the mind and spiritual outlook are not opposed to each other; they serve different functions. However, together they hold the best hope of achieving the highest happiness, with fewer risks. Third, there is no intrinsic opposition between science

and spirituality. There are, of course, epistemic differences between them. They follow different methodological strategies which are valid in their respective domains. Problems arise and mistakes are made when there is conflation of the two, and when transgression of the paths takes place, such as the attempts to prove the existence of God by science or the denigration of evolutionary theories by assertions of creation by some religious sects.

It would not be correct to say that science alone leads to truth. Perhaps it can be said that science leads us more reliably to understand the physical world. The same may be said about spirituality as being more appropriate in dealing with non-physical matters such as values. There may be areas where both approaches are appropriate and a unified approach more fruitful.

In the Indian tradition, both science and spirituality have the same goal, which is *liberation* (*mokṣa*). The goal of science is enriching the human condition by freeing it from constraints of hunger, disease and deprivation; and creating physical conditions for comfort, convenience and need gratification. With their exponential growth during our lifetime, we have come to expect science and its offshoot technologies to provide plenty for all. The growth is not without its problems, however. The explosive growth of science with unpredictable consequences threatens to subvert and distort life itself on this planet. Nuclear energy and genetic engineering, for example, which have extra-ordinary potential to transform the human condition, are more feared today than loved. The promise of science to satisfy human needs has not helped to reduce the needs. Rather, it spurred the insatiable desire for more. Indiscriminate exploitation of resources and ingenious destruction of the environment followed. Also, the belief that satisfying the physical needs of food and shelter, and the psychological concerns of security and stability, will lead humans to devote themselves to finer aspects of life—such as pursuing art and promoting values of love, compassion and altruism—is belied. Economic prosperity and happiness appear to be unrelated beyond a point. Thus science as a liberating influence appears to have serious limits.

The goal of spirituality, like that of science, is also liberation. It is the liberation of the inner spirit. Spirituality could be seen as a complementary force that gives a positive direction to science and acts as an antidote to the latter's use for destructive purposes. In the least, it provides coping mechanisms to deal with psychologically debilitating anxiety, stress, fear and helplessness. At its best, spirituality is known to free humans from all kinds of suffering born out of dysfunctional egos with insatiable desires, and consequent personal frustration and externally directed aggression. *Spirituality could be a soothing syrup to congested minds that cough conflict and abuse*. At the same time, it may also be seen as a blinding influence that shuns reason, spurts superstitious behaviour and stifles ambition and achievement. Instead of liberating, it could exile the human spirit to the dark recesses of ignorance, disease and deprivation. Thus both science and spirituality are double-edged. They could be used to emancipate or to enslave. However, working in tandem, they could help enhance human potential, limiting each other's adverse effects.

A dialogue between science and spirituality would help to clarify their relative roles. In this context, exploring areas in which spiritual matters, such as whether prayer affects measurable empirical variables like health, is of considerable importance. Spiritual psychology is the discipline of relevance here.

Spiritual psychology

Science has methods that work well in their legitimate domains of application. It would be a category mistake, however, to ask of science the proof for the existence of God. It would be equally inappropriate to ask for a spiritual explanation of the structure of the atom. Does it follow then that science is science and spirituality is spirituality and the two shall never meet? Not necessarily so. If it were, the question of dialogue between the two would not arise. Inasmuch as the human mind is the source from which science and spirituality spring and merge back in consciousness, as postulated in the unified theory—despite the distinctly parallel tracks on which they run—there is obvious interaction between the two in our lives. The science–spirituality dialogue is predicated on such interactions. Spiritual psychology focuses on them as its subject matter.

We said that science and spirituality spring from the human mind. However, they manifest as two distinct epistemic modes. One is the rational mode. It is mediated by the senses, the nervous system, and the brain. The other, the intuitive mode, is the revelational component of spiritual experience. It is the so-called transcendental aspect of our being that is not mediated but directly experienced. It processes consciousness-as-such. It is *knowing* by *being*. As William James puts it: 'Mystical experiences are as direct perceptions of fact for those who have them as any sensations ever were for us' (1902/1914, pp. 423–424). The existence of the intuitive/revelational mode is fundamental for spiritual experiences, just as the brain and sensory processing are essential for scientific understanding. Science is based on cognitive processing of information. In the Indian tradition, spirituality is considered transcognitive. Consciousness is believed to manifest in humans at the cognitive as well as transcognitive (transcendental) levels. Spiritual psychology explores the two together in the phenomena that are a joint manifestation of sense and reason on the one hand, and intuition and experience on the other.

Without miracles and mystical experiences, the sacred texts of most religions would be left with little credible substance. The miracles and revelational experiences may have a spiritual source. For this reason, they are labelled as non-natural or supernatural phenomena and are seen as conflicting with the basic limiting principles of science. For some, that is a sufficient justification for their rejection as genuine phenomena. Such a rejection would be comforting if one were to live in the domain of natural science alone. That would leave out, however, a great deal in our beliefs and practices. Exploring the spiritual component in our beliefs and behaviour is the business of spiritual psychology.

Science is based on reason and observation. Spiritual truths are born of revelations and are anchored in experience. Science in general is third-person oriented,

whereas spirituality is first-person practised. Thus science and religion enjoy two diametrically different perspectives. Their validity essentially depends on the validity of the sources from which their respective claims emerge. If revelations are delusional experiences of maladjusted messiahs, religious beliefs tend to be false and detrimental. On the contrary, if they are indeed non-rational forms of knowing the truth, then there must be a non-rational source or pathway to truth. If there are thus two diametrically different sources of truth seeking, in which scientific discoveries and technologies on the one hand and religious beliefs and practices on the other are based, it is enormously important that we study the authenticity of religious experiences as we do the validity of scientific discoveries. It is the business of spiritual psychology to do just that. Since the mind is the seat/base of all knowledge, spiritual psychology attempts to study the mind as the interfacing instrumentality between science and religion. In an important sense, it is an attempt to apply spirituality underlying religious behaviour to psychology in general, and to its transpersonal and transcognitive aspects in particular.

Spiritual psychology is both a branch of psychology, like child psychology and social psychology, and a system of psychology, like psychoanalysis. It has a set of basic postulates that provide an overarching theoretical orientation. The basic postulate in this case is the primacy of spirit defined as the principle or centre of consciousness in the embodied human condition. Spiritual psychology, acknowledging the primacy of the spirit, explores its relation to the mind and the body in the person. Spiritual psychology explores the unity of the spirit, the mind and the body as they manifest in the human context. It serves as the bridge to connect the otherwise disparate realms of personal and transpersonal, the secular and the sacred, the cognitive and the transcognitive processes.

Spiritual psychology shares a great deal with religious psychology and yet is very different from it. Religious psychology, as the Cambridge psychologist R. H. Thouless (1972) defined it, seeks 'to understand religious behaviour by applying to it the psychological principles derived from the study of non-religious behaviour'. Spiritual psychology goes well beyond this. It seeks to understand human nature itself from the study of the spiritual aspects in our beliefs and behaviour. Postulation of the primacy of the spirit is the defining characteristic of spiritual psychology. Spirit (*ātman)*, in the Indian tradition, is consciousness-as-such. Consequently, the study of consciousness-as-such in its relation to the thinking-mind and the sensing-brain constitutes the subject matter of spiritual psychology.

Theoretical base

Indian psychology has much to offer for a foundational base to build the edifice of spiritual psychology. Psychology in the Indian tradition is an 'inner' discipline in search of realizing truth and perfection in the human condition. The goal is to find oneself in an unconditioned and unmasked state. While assuming that consciousness is the ground condition of all knowledge, Indian psychology studies consciousness in its multifaceted manifestations and seeks to explore the

experience of its true nature in one's being. Indian psychology is not only a body of generalizable principles, but it is also a set of practices that can be used for the transformation of the human condition towards perfection. It has its own methods appropriate to its subject matter and objectives. The methods are observational, but they are different from the externally oriented observations of 'outer' sciences. They are a peculiar blend of first- second- and third-person perspectives. They provide for personal, subjective, and non-relational authenticity and in-group inter-subject validity (Rao, 2002). The strength of Indian psychology consists in the potential it offers for transformation through successive stages and processes of deconditioning the person to a state of freedom and perfection. The following twelve points/principles provide the outline of a model based on classical Indian psychological thought:

1. Psychology is the study of the *person* (*jīva*).
2. The *person* is consciousness embodied.
3. The *person* is not an isolated and disconnected entity in that the *jīva* is transpersonal and interconnected by transcognitive states.
4. Consciousness-as-such is irreducibly distinct from material objects, including the brain and the mind.
5. The mind is different from consciousness as well as the body/brain machine. Unlike consciousness, the mind is material, albeit subtle. Unlike the brain, the mind has non-local characteristics, that is, it is not constrained by time and space variables, as gross material objects are. Thus the mind is the facilitating principle and function that interfaces consciousness at one end and the brain processes at the other.
6. Consciousness in the human context, that is, consciousness embodied, appears circumscribed, conditioned and clouded by a vortex of forces generated by the mind–body connection. Consequently, the conditioned person becomes an isolated instrument of individualized thought, passion and action.
7. From individuation arise, on the one hand, subjectivity, rational thinking and relativity of truth and values. On the other hand, there arises the ego as the organizing principle.
8. With the ego, come attachment and craving which lead the person in turn to experience anxiety, insecurity, stress, distress, disease and consequent suffering.
9. Situated in such an existential predicament of ignorance and suffering, the goal of the person is self-realization.
10. Self-realization consists in achieving a state of *freedom* and *liberation (mokṣa)* by a process of deconditioning training and consequent transformation of the person to achieve higher states of awareness and achievement. This is accomplished by accessing consciousness-as-such in transcognitive states.
11. Endowed with consciousness, mind and body, the person is capable

of brain-processed *learning* (*śravaṇa*), mind-generated *understanding* (*manana*) and consciousness-accessed *realization* (*nididhyāsana*).

12. Yoga is a method of liberation via realization of transcognitive states. Realization takes different forms relative to the different dispositions of the seekers. These include knowledge-focussed *jñāna yoga* to meet the thought needs, devotion-filled *bhakti yoga* to deal with one's passionate nature, and action oriented *karma yoga* for those dominated by the impulse to act. Thus *wisdom*, *worship* and *work* are three distinct routes for self-realization.

This model makes a fundamental distinction between 'consciousness/spirit' and 'mind', and a secondary distinction between 'mind' and 'brain'. Consciousness is the knowledge side of the universe. It is the ground condition for all awareness. Consciousness is not a part or aspect of the mind, which, unlike consciousness, is physical. Consciousness does not interact with the mind or any other objects or processes of the physical universe. However, in association with consciousness, mental phenomena become subjective and are revealed to and realized by the person.

In this view, the mind is the interfacing instrumentality that faces consciousness/spirit on one side and the brain and the physical world on the other. The mind thus gives the impression of having two faces—the physical side in its relation to the brain and other physical systems, and the subjective side facing consciousness/spirit. From the physical side, the mind collects information by processing the inputs it receives. This is normal cognitive processing. When the information thus processed is exposed to consciousness at the other end, that is, when the light of consciousness is reflected on it, there is conscious experience of the phenomenal data. In a reflexive situation, where the reflection of consciousness reflects back in consciousness (*pratibimba)*, one has subjective awareness.

The mind, though physical like the brain, is different from it. The mind is closely connected to different systems of the brain. It influences and is influenced by events in the brain. Most Indian traditions assert that the mind is comprised of subtler forms of matter than the brain. Consequently, it has different characteristics such as non-locality. Its subtle character makes it possible to receive the light of consciousness/spirit to reflect its contents. By virtue of its implicit non-local nature, it is possible for the mind to act on systems beyond the body complex with which it is associated. Such a conception of the mind leaves open the possibility that the mind may survive the destruction and cessation of the associated body at a given time.

The mind thus enjoys dual citizenship in the physical world as well as in the realm of consciousness. As a material form, the mind's citizenship in the material world is by birth as it were. Its naturalization in the domain of consciousness/spirit is a matter of choice and an outcome of significant effort. Its citizenship in the material realm bestows on it the right to process information through its sensory channels and neural connections. The mind also has involuntary and passive access to consciousness in that the light of consciousness shines on it to

illumine its critically poised contents, which become subjectively revealed. The mind also has within its reach the possibility of partaking in consciousness-as-such by disciplined practice so that it may have direct and unmediated knowledge. This possibility is otherwise remote because of the mind's habitual involvement with the sensory and cortical processes.

In the dual roles of the mind, two distinct processes—the cognitive and the transcognitive—aid the mind. The former involves sensory-motor processes; while the transpersonal processes involve accessing consciousness-as-such and achieving pure conscious states. In normal cognitive processes, consciousness is *reflected* in the mind. Awareness consists in those reflections. In transcognitive processes, consciousness is *realized* in the mind. Awareness in such a state consists in a relationship of identity with consciousness.

The main concern of psychology, in general, is with the normal processes of the mind. Therefore, the spotlight is on the brain and the sensory processes that give us information. Observational techniques from the third-person perspective are appropriately employed to study mental phenomena. Consciousness-as-such, which is not accessible to third-person observation, is lost sight of in scientific discussions. The consequence is a physical paradigm of the mind functioning in a mechanical universe. Functions of the mind, it is assumed, are best understood by identifying the correlated brain states. Significant shortcomings of this approach include: (a) consciousness-as-such is routinely ignored; (b) higher states of consciousness generally remain outside the scope of consciousness studies; and (c) the interest in studying consciousness is confined to the theoretical side, with little appreciation of its practical implications for developing higher states of awareness. The goal has been one of maintaining normality rather than seeking to transcend it.

Theory to testing

So far we have attempted to model a perspective for studying spirituality in the context of doing psychology. If psychology is considered a scientific pursuit to understand human nature, spiritual psychology is an area in which science and spirituality do not go their separate ways; they are not compartmentalized. Rather they are seen as complementing each other. What happens then to the basic issue of incompatibility of science and spirituality? We are told that science essentially deals with observable and tangible things. Its methods require operationalization of variables and replication of results. It is argued that the methods of science make philosophical commitments inconsistent, if not incompatible, with the conceptual foundations of spirituality (Slife, Hope & Nebeker, 1996). Psychology made a commitment to strictly adhere to the methods of natural science. Is it possible then for psychology to study spirituality which stems from altogether different theoretical assumptions? If the hallmark of spirituality is transcendence, can transcendence be studied by methods developed within the sensory framework? Does this necessitate a reinterpretation of spirituality and altering of spiritual conceptions to fit the requirements of science and its methods? Slife, Hope and Nebeker

(1996), for example, raised these questions as worthy of formal discussions as they observed that the recent work of researchers in spirituality 'has the potential, at least, to undermine the very conceptions these researchers are attempting to test' (p. 78).

Such concerns are largely an outcome of the prevailing positivist mindset in the Western psychological tradition. In the Indian tradition, for example, there is no such limitation or narrowing of science to observable and tangible phenomena. In fact, there is no clear-cut incompatibility or conflict between science and spirituality. Transcendence is the goal of spirituality; and is achieved through a process of transformation. Transformation takes place in the physical plane by gaining control over normal psychological processes. Meditation, for example, is a method suggested to bring about the transformation of the person and achieve a state of transcendence. Psychology in the Indian tradition has a workable blueprint for erecting the edifice of spiritual psychology by sidestepping the science-spirituality dichotomy. Consciousness is the common denominator of science as well as spirituality.

Spiritual psychology and general psychology represent two distinct conceptual streams that flow in two different directions. The spirituality stream deals with states of pure consciousness and their role in human condition. The general psychology stream touches only the periphery of consciousness and thus leaves out the spiritual and transcendental experiences. Together the two streams appear to cover the entire spectrum of mental phenomena. Therefore, if there were a confluence between the two, we may be in a better position to understand the unity and nexus between mind, body and consciousness. Spiritual psychology is an exercise toward that end. Spirituality per se may not be empirically tested; but, I believe, its effects can be observed and measured.

Implications and applications

Socio-political implications

Spiritual psychology has important implications and some possible applications. M. K. Gandhi's thought and experiments in political action may be seen as grounded in spiritual psychology. The concept of *satyāgraha* and the non-violent action themes for social change and moral reconstruction are landmark experiments in spiritual psychology. Gandhi spoke of 'spiritual force'. He referred to an 'inner voice' guiding him. His emphasis on truth, non-violence, love, compassion, and altruism are hallmarks of spiritual psychology applied to life and social action (Gandhi, 1938, 1958). Thus spiritual psychology has socio-political relevance; and research in this area, which is lagging, is truly warranted.

Therapeutic implications

As mentioned, the primacy of the spirit is basic to spiritual psychology. The concept of spirit has diverse connotations. In Indian psychology, *ātman* (Vedānta) or *puruṣa* (Sāṁkhya-Yoga), come close to the English word 'spirit'. *Ātman* is

consciousness-as-such, unclouded by and free from the polluting accretions emanating from the sensory processes. Sri Aurobindo (1992) called the embodied, incarnate portion or aspect of the *ātman* the 'psychic being' of the person. In Western psychology—especially in its applied therapeutic aspects—the ego occupies the centre stage, taking the place of the spirit. It is the functioning of the ego that is of primary concern. Understanding the problems of adjustment of the ego, and dysfunctions of the ego caused by factors such as chemical imbalances, childhood trauma, or problems of sex, has been the saga of much of Western clinical psychology and psychotherapeutic practices.

The ego in the Indian psychological tradition is a manifestation of the mind and not of consciousness. It masks the spirit, the self. Shrouded by ignorance, the ego masquerades as the self. Therefore, tearing down the veil of ignorance, taming the ego, transcending the limiting adjuncts of the mind to allow the true light of the spirit to shine and reflect on the mind of the person, become the focus of spiritual psychology. This is what is involved in the process of transformation of the person. Yoga, for example, is a method of training for such transformation. According to Sri Aurobindo, there are three intra-psychic processes involved in ego-transformation. They are aspiration, surrender and rejection. *Aspiration* is the motivating factor, the driving force to feel the presence of the divine spirit. If spirit is consciousness-as-such, aspiration is the desire to access consciousness-as-such. *Surrender* refers to the openness to witness consciousness-as-such with no prior notions, attitudes and expectations. *Rejection* is the throwing out of all those ego accretions that cloud consciousness-as-such, so as to allow the unencumbered play of the psychic being. The function of the psychic being is accessing consciousness-as-such to guide and transform both our individual and collective life (Sri Aurobindo, 1992).

Western psychology pays more attention to ego-adjustment than ego-transformation. For example, the discussions often revolve around the defence mechanisms. G. E. Vaillant (1993) in *The Wisdom of the Ego* provides a brilliant classification of the varieties of defence mechanisms and styles of functioning, ranging from psychotic delusions to mature altruism and humour. All these styles, whether normal or aberrational, are attempts at adjustment and not transformation of the ego. Transformation involves tracing the route back from existential suffering, controlling craving and attachment, and transcending the limiting adjuncts of the mind so that the clouds of ignorance hovering around the person are dispelled and the person experiences states of pure consciousness. Such experiences are the transformational resource and gateway to realization, the discovery of the spirit within. Spiritual psychology in the Indian tradition is positive psychology that promotes health, happiness and joy in a non-ego binding manner. It is the joy of the spirit and not of the ego that the transformed person experiences. The general psychotherapeutic approach is horizontal, travelling across the existential contours of the ego. The spirituality way is vertical, elevating the person from the tangled ego to the sublime heights of the spirit, that is, states of pure conscious experience.

In the Western tradition, consciousness and the mind are conflated. By considering intentionality as the defining characteristic of consciousness, the

possibility of the existence of pure conscious states, that is, consciousness without sensory content, is pre-empted. Consequently consciousness is either denied and reduced to processes in the brain or left completely unfathomable as in radical dualist postulations with an unbridgeable chasm between mind and body.

Understanding extra-ordinary human experience

Extra-ordinary human experiences such as telepathy and the direct action of mind over matter, which is technically labelled as psychokinesis (PK) pose severe explanatory challenges within the Western paradigm of science. They refer to events that cannot simply occur in the physical universe as we know it. The basic limiting principles, as C. D. Broad (1953) labelled them, governing the assumptive base of science rule out the possibility of mind-to-mind communication that does not involve meaningful transformation of energy between minds. Similarly non-inferential precognition is an absurdity. All attempts to naturalize the supernatural—that is what parapsychology hopes to do—result in the paradox of demolishing the very assumptive base of science by science itself. The attempts to find a naturalistic explanation of extrasensory perception (ESP), which is the ability to communicate without any sensory channel, and PK have not been successful. These include observational theories based on quantum mechanics (Irwin, 1999).

I am inclined to argue that research in the area of extra-ordinary human experience is unlikely to make much headway if the research continues to employ the disjunctive Western conceptual categories. The most that could be established within the Western paradigm is to provide extensive and even compelling evidence for the existence of cognitive anomalies. Beyond this, I venture to hazard, few insights into the nature of the phenomena themselves could be gained by methods that basically assume their non-existence.

In this context, spiritual psychology has much to offer and may give a new direction and a fresh impetus to parapsychological research. In Indian spiritual psychology, for example, there are concepts, methods and models that could make a difference. In the classical Indian tradition, no sharp distinction is made between the natural and the supernatural, the scientific and the spiritual. At some level of awareness, even the subject–object dichotomy disappears. Consequently, neither the paradox of naturalizing the supernormal nor the perplexities of parapsychological research pose any serious threat for an understanding of the psychic process within the paradigm of spiritual psychology.

Implications for health and wellness

The recent investigations in the area of epidemiology of religion, and clinical studies of the effect of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices on health and wellness, belong to the domain of spiritual psychology. There are now many researchers actively engaged researching in this area. Koenig, McCullough and Larson (2001) review in their *Handbook of Religion and Health* 1,200 research reports and 400 reviews.

Religion of one kind or another has existed in all societies; and it has had profound effects on the lives of those who practice it. Prayer is central to all religious practices. It is universal and ubiquitous, crossing cultural and geographical boundaries. It encompasses all religions, even those that do not specifically acknowledge an entity like God, as in Buddhism. Although the form and object of worship may vary, offering prayers is a pervasive phenomenon that is considered neither unusual nor abnormal. According to a survey published in 1996 by Princeton Religion Research Center, 96% of the US population believed in God or a supernormal power. Despite the universally prevalent and largely shared religious behaviour and the belief that prayer is a means of propitiating gods or invoking supernatural forces/abilities to help improve human condition, it remained a largely unexplored area until recently for contemporary social scientists. However, during the past fifteen years, there are literally hundreds of research reports published in refereed journals.

There are several significant studies that explored the relationship between religiosity and a variety of health conditions. In about 150 studies on alcohol and drug abuse and religious involvement, most of the studies 'suggest less substance abuse and drug abuse and more successful rehabilitation among the more religious' (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001). Also, numerous studies investigated the effect of religion on mental health, delinquency, depression, heart disease, immune system dysfunction, cancer and physical disability. (For a comprehensive review of research in these areas, see Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001).

Surveys of literature and meta-analysis of published research seem to confirm the claims of individual researchers linking religious practices with better health outcomes. For example, in a systematic and comprehensive review, Townsend, Kladder, Ayele and Mulligan (2002) assessed the impact of religion on health outcomes. They reviewed all experiments involving randomized controlled trials, published between 1996 and 1999, that assessed the relationship between religious practices and measurable health variables. The review revealed that 'religious involvement and spirituality are associated with better health outcomes, including greater longevity, coping skills, and health related quality of life and less anxiety'. In a meta-analytic review of 29 independent samples, McCullough et al. (2000, p. 1) report that religious involvement has a strong positive influence of increased survival.

If religious involvement does have beneficial health outcomes, as many of the published reports in the West seem to suggest, then we may ask: How does this relationship work? What is its modus operandi, the process that underlies the presumed effect? What is the channel? Who is the source? These important, though often tricky, questions have no easy answers. The favoured explanation is a secular one. Religious beliefs and practices may have psychological effects, which in turn bring about somatic changes. If indeed religious beliefs and activities help to reduce anxiety, stress and depression, they could also help to shield their negative effects on general health and well-being.

As Koenig, Larson and Larson (2001) surmise, when people become physically

ill, many rely heavily on religious beliefs and practices to relieve stress, retain a sense of control, and maintain hope and sense of meaning and purpose in life. It is suggested that religion (a) acts as a social support system, (b) reduces the sense of loss of control and helplessness, (c) provides a cognitive framework that reduces suffering and enhances self-esteem, (d) gives confidence that one, with the help of God, could influence the health condition, and (e) creates a mindset that enables the patient to relax and allow the body to heal itself. Again, the values engendered by religious involvement such as love, compassion, charity, benevolence, and altruism may help to successfully cope with debilitating anxiety, stress and depression. All this may be true. Yet, there are issues that go beyond these explanations. For example, if the observed effects of distant intercessory prayer on the health of patients, who did not even know that some one was praying for them, are genuine, as they seem to be, the above secular explanations become clearly inadequate. We need more than a healthy mindset on the part of the patient to recover from illness because someone, unknown to him, had prayed for his recovery. There may be more to religion than being a social and psychological support system. Consider, for example, the case of remote intercessory prayer and its ramifications for future research in the area that explores the effects of religious activities on health and well-being.

Distant (remote) intercessory prayer

A number of studies provide positive evidence linking intercessory prayer with beneficial health outcomes. Intercessory prayer involves praying for others' benefit. In some of these studies, the patients did not know that someone was praying for them. Yet, their condition seemed to have improved compared to the controlled group of patients who did not have the benefit of someone praying for them. Michael Miovic (2004) referred to two cases published recently in the journal *Alternate Therapies,* which document the effects of healing at a distance and 'how an "energy" healer used intention-at-a-distance to cure a girl of glioblastoma multiforme, a very aggressive brain tumour. In this case, the diagnosis and cure were so convincingly established with contemporary medical technology (biopsies and serial brain scans), and the disease itself is known to be so uniformly fatal that it is difficult to ascribe the healer's results to pure chance' (p. 58).

In a double blind study involving 393 coronary care patients, Randolph Byrd (1988) divided his subjects into two randomized groups. One group is the intercessory prayer group and the other is the control group. Neither the physicians attending on them nor the patients themselves knew which patients were being prayed for. Also, those who actually offered prayers did not know the patients for whose recovery they were praying. Results showed that the patients in the intercessory prayer group experienced significantly fewer episodes of congestive heart failures ($p < .05$), fewer cardiac arrests ($p < .05$), received fewer antibiotics ($p < .005$) and required less respirator support and medication ($p < .0001$). W. S. Harris et al. (1999) conducted a double blind study of distant intercessory prayer with 990

patients in the cardiac care unit. In this study with randomized controlled trials, it was observed that the experimental group (the prayed for patients) recovered better than the control group of patients. The results are statistically significant, even after correction for multiple analyses. In a meta-analysis of published studies, Mueller, Plevak and Rummans (2001) found that randomized controlled trials had shown a significant positive effect between intercessory prayer and recovery from coronary disease. They observed that addressing the spiritual needs of the patient may enhance recovery from illness.

If these effects of distant intercessory prayer are genuine, as they seem to be, how do we explain them? The secular explanations of the sort considered earlier are clearly inadequate. What is the mechanism involved? Who is the source? What is the channel? It was clearly understood by those who offered the prayers that it was God who was involved, responding to the prayer to influence the health outcome of the patients. Are we then experimenting with God? Can science go beyond itself and deal with spirituality and the divine? This could be scary and frightening to those who assume the essential incompatibility of science and spirituality.

Impressed with the extensive publications in the area, Chibnall, Jeral and Cerullo (2001) toiled for a couple of years to do a methodologically sophisticated and conceptually unambiguous study to test the influence of distant intercessory prayer on health. They found themselves unable to proceed beyond a critical review of the published reports. Their paper, 'Experiments on Distant Intercessory Prayer: God, Science, and the Lesson of Messiah', turned out to be more a debunking exercise rather than a constructive contribution. They conclude that this area of research is simply unproductive. They argue, among other things, that the notion of intervention by supernatural beings does not simply meet the basic testability and explanatory requirements of science. They write: 'Science does not deny God, miracles, and the like, it merely neglects them…. Science cannot actualize spirituality, so why do we ask this of it?' This paper became quite influential among health professionals in the West for the reason that its rationale is quite consistent with the mindset that makes a clear separation between science and spirituality, between what is believed to be natural as distinguished from the supernatural, which is considered ex-hypothesis as beyond the scope of science. Such separation of the natural and the supernatural engenders among scientists the fear of trespassing into the sacred, which, it would seem, is one of the powerful reasons behind the efforts to fault researches in this and similar areas.

Comforting the critics of the studies reporting significant positive influence of intercessory prayer on health in humans are the results of a recent multi-million dollar study (Benson et al., 2006) funded by John Templeton Foundation in USA. This study of the therapeutic effects of intercessory prayer in cardiac bypass patients, carried out by a team of sixteen researchers, involved three groups of randomly assigned patients in six US hospitals. One group numbering 604 patients received intercessory prayer after being informed that they may or may not receive prayer. The second group of 597 patients did not receive the prayer after similar information that they may or may not receive the prayer. The third group of 601

subjects received intercessory prayer after they were told that they would receive such a prayer.

The subjects in the two prayed-for groups received 14 days of prayer for uncomplicated recovery after the bypass surgery. The primary measure of outcome is the presence of any complication within thirty days of surgery.

The results showed no significant benefit to the patients in the prayed-for groups over the control group of patients who did not receive any prayers. On the contrary, it was found that the patients in group three, who were told that they would receive and did in fact receive prayers, fared significantly worse compared to the other two groups. From this the authors conclude that intercessory prayer itself 'had no effect on complication-free recovery' from the bypass surgery.

The publication of this study by Benson et al. (2006) was considered by several commentators as the final word on the efficacy of intercessory prayer, even though Benson himself leaves room for more studies. I believe this study should not be considered alone. It is in the nature of studies in areas like this that you do not expect replication each time one conducts a study. It is the cumulative results of a number of studies evaluated by an appropriate meta-analysis that should guide our generalizations. Therefore, the Benson et al. study should be seen not only in relation to other studies involving intercessory prayer but also along with a significant amount of literature available in related areas like studies of direct action of mind over matter or psychokinetic effects. Then, one realizes why these effects are not replicable on demand and why occasionally the observed effect is opposite of the one expected, which is technically known as psi-missing. Also, it would not be correct to say that there was no significant influence of intercessory prayer on health outcome in the study by Benson and associates, because the observed difference between the non-prayed for and prayed for groups in this study is statistically significant. Parapsychological literature is replete with such effects (Rhine, 1952; Rao, 1965). Rather it was a negative or psi-missing effect, the one opposite of expectation. This is not that unusual as Rao's (1965) reviews have shown.

Such attempts to scientifically test the effects of spirituality on life show why the argument that researches in the religion–health area do not meet the testability requirements of science is unconvincing, if not false. In addition, there is no intrinsic reason to bring in God or supernatural beings as the source of observed effects of distant intercessory prayer on health. Consider, for example, the wealth of studies that show similar effects of the influence of direct mental influence on remote biological systems. There is a large empirical database accumulated over the years by William Braud and associates that provides strong evidence suggestive of the possibility of influencing the physiology of a remotely situated person by sheer mental intention of another person. Braud and Schlitz (1991) review eight separate experiments in which the subjects attempted to influence remote biological systems by simply wishing such a change. The crucial difference between prayer and such wishing is that no supernatural being is invoked in the wish phenomenon, unlike in the prayer, which is generally directed at seeking the help of God to grant the wish. The results of the experiments by Braud and associates show that a

subject by mental intention alone could influence in the desired direction (a) the autonomic nervous system activity of a remotely situated person, (b) the muscular tremor and ideo-motor reactions, (c) mental imagery of another person, and (d) the rate of haemolysis of human red blood cells in vitro. There is no reference in these studies to supernatural beings or non-testable entities. As Braud points out, based on the over all statistical results, the distant mental influence effects are relatively reliable and robust. The magnitude of the effects is not trivial and is comparable to self-regulation effects. The ability to mentally influence is apparently widely distributed. Thus, these experiments not only show the feasibility of scientifically studying such phenomena as healing through distant intercessory prayer, but they suggest also that the source of the effect may be a living person and not necessarily a supernatural entity like God.

Conclusion

I am convinced that spiritual psychology is a viable discipline and that Indian psychology may be seen as providing the foundational base for it. It should be mentioned, however, that spiritual psychology is different from the psychology of religion, and that religion and spirituality are distinct and different in some important aspects, even though the two are often used interchangeably by researchers exploring the effects of religion on health and well-being. It is necessary to underscore the distinction. Religion is doctrinaire and denominational, having specific behavioural and social consequences. Therefore, being religious implies more than being spiritual. Spirituality is not circumscribed within the bounds of any one religion. Rather it is guided by a belief in what may be called the transcendental aspect of being. While all religions aim at promoting spirituality, there is the distinct possibility that the manifest forms of religious worship and participation in religious activities may be dissociated from intrinsic spirituality. Therefore, a measure of religiosity need not be a measure of spirituality. Researchers are now becoming increasingly aware of this possibility. The Fetzer scale of 'Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality' explicitly recognizes the distinction between religiosity and spirituality.

The Indian social scientists will have an advantage over their Western colleagues in carrying out research at the explanatory level of this area. At the outset, they would be less encumbered and constrained by what I consider a regressive notion that involves the dichotomy of spirituality and science. In Indian psychology, we have appropriate concepts and viable research strategies to meaningfully deal with phenomena that appear anomalous on the surface. In my encounters with theoretical issues in psychology, I find Indian models very helpful. The concept of pure consciousness, the possibility of knowing by being, and the numerous mind-transforming techniques traditionally practised in India, such as yoga, would be useful in modelling process-oriented research in this area.

Centrality of consciousness is the defining characteristic of Indian psychology (Rao, 2004). In the classical Indian tradition, consciousness is not conceived

as an epiphenomenon or as a quality of experience. Rather consciousness is an autonomous principle, the ground condition of all knowing. However, not all knowing is of the sensory kind, which gives us only representational knowledge. There is another kind of knowing, knowing by being, which arises when we access consciousness-as-such. In a state of pure consciousness, we are told, one has non-representational direct awareness. In such a state, there is no possibility of dissociation between knowing and being, cognition and conduct, and thought and action. As the *Upaniṣadic* statement proclaims, 'to know *brahman* is to be *brahman*'. If sensory awareness gives one understanding of the phenomena, knowing by being results in the realization of the phenomena in his/her being. The lives of true saints and those who have had genuine 'peak' experiences are instances of those who achieved realization in various degrees. Realization, on the one hand, removes any gap between belief and behaviour. On the other, it has important transformational consequences to the person and his well-being. It is important to recognize that the notion of pure consciousness is not an armchair metaphysical postulate. It is an empirical claim embedded in Indian tradition. We will do well to understand it and study its implications to psychological research. Spiritual psychology is the discipline that could unravel the many mysteries that shroud the several layers of higher consciousness.

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2

A journey back to the roots: Psychology in India

Ajit K. Dalal

For almost a century, academic psychology in India has continued to be an alien discipline. In the beginning of the last century, psychology was imported lock, stock, and barrel from the West, and was first implanted in 1916 at Calcutta University. The Western model of research and teaching provided the basis on which Indian research grew for a long period. For Indian psychologists trained in the Western traditions, it has been a long journey to turn towards their own heritage and take Indian concepts and theories germane to understanding Indian social reality. Indeed, in this long history, concerns have been voiced from time to time to align psychology with contemporary social issues, so as to meet the challenges of rapid socio-economic and global changes. Looking back, one gets an impression that psychology in India has come a long way to find its roots in its own native wisdom, though it still has to cover much ground to become a science of Indian origin.

Throughout its existence as an alien implant, psychology has been struggling to ground itself in the Indian soil and adapt to local conditions. Over the years this implant has grown, with branches spreading all over the country. However, it has not borne fruits as expected and has largely remained a sterile academic pursuit, as far as the real issues of national development are concerned. The non-visibility of psychologists in various national forums gives rise to serious concerns about its relevance and future. What kind of psychology we aspire to have in the twenty-first century is contingent on a better understanding of the present state-of-the-art. This chapter aims to examine the status of psychology in India as a scientific discipline, identifying the factors responsible for its retarded growth. It also discusses the parallel movement now underway to rediscover the knowledge rooted in scriptures and folk practices, and explores its relevance in the present times.

Three sets of arguments are put forward to explain the retarded growth of academic psychology in India. One, which is more charitable, is the lack of a supportive intellectual climate. In a country where a vast population lives in a condition of subhuman poverty, and decisions about social developmental programmes

are politically motivated, any scholarly pursuit is considered peripheral. The academic institutions plagued by a rising student population, political manipulations and lack of funds have gradually become non-performers. There is no premium placed on excellence in teaching and research. Adair, Pandey, Begam, Puhan and Vora (1995) conducted a study on sixty-four Indian psychologists through a mailed questionnaire. The survey revealed three major impediments to research productivity: (a) lack of supportive intellectual climate, (b) poor professional support, and (c) inadequate research funding. Ostensibly, the lack of an academic culture and a non-supportive socio-political environment are greatly responsible for the prevailing state of affairs. It does explain the overall decline in the academic standards in the country. It, however, throws no light on 'why is psychology in India lagging behind other sisterly disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology and economics?' It brings forth the second line of argument that there are some inherent limitations in psychology as a scientific discipline. Its excessive conformity to empiricist-positivist methodologies and confining to micro-level problems have restricted the scope of its psycho-social inquiry.

This methodological approach is insufficient to take up more applied macro-level problems (Dalal, 2010). The restricted boundaries of the discipline obviate the need to work in applied settings, or to work with governmental or non-governmental agencies. The third set of arguments focus on the personal and professional background of Indian psychologists. Psychologists in the first half of this century were a product of the colonial domination of Indian society, greatly influenced by Western scholarly traditions. The first generation psychologists after India's Independence were predominantly converts from the philosophy background. This combined with their elitist-urban background; fewer job openings and self-serving research orientation gave Indian psychologists an identity distinct from those who belonged to other sister disciplines. This chapter examines the progress of psychology in India against the backdrop of these arguments. It endeavours to explore the possibilities of psychology becoming a more vibrant science, accepting the challenges of a rapidly changing Indian society. We need a psychology which is a positive discipline conducive to self-growth and social harmony.

Indian psychology has come a long way in the hundred years of its existence. Today, there are a large number of teaching and research institutions offering wide range of courses in psychology. It is not known how many colleges and universities offer psychology courses and how many psychologists are professionally active. There is no data which official agencies, like the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), or the Department of Science and Technology, can furnish. One estimate (A. K. Jain, 2005) suggests that there are more than 15,000 psychologists in India. In any case, India has the largest number of psychologists outside the Western block, and is considered a 'publication giant' among all developing countries (Gilgin & Gilgin, 1987). This rapid expansion of the discipline has aroused many hopes and expectations about its possible contribution to the success of nation-building projects. The problems of poverty, illiteracy, urban decay and disease control cannot be handled on the

basis of sound economic planning only, but also require changes in the attitudes and beliefs of people, and their motivations for collective action. This calls for a realistic appraisal of the impediments which psychology in India is currently experiencing. Psychology needs to break its present disciplinary shackles to join hands with other social sciences. Currently, much soul-searching is going on within the discipline; and it is realized that psychology in India needs to be rooted in its own history and heritage.

In recent years there have been several good publications which enable a critical evaluation of the development of psychology in India. Some of these writings (Dalal, 1990, 1996, 2002; Misra & Gergen, 1993; D. Sinha, 1986, 1996; J. B. P. Sinha, 1993) have critically evaluated the progress of psychology. The five surveys of research in psychology (Mitra, 1972; Pareek, 1980, 1981; J. Pandey, 1988, 2001, 2004) cover important research contributions since the beginning of the last century. Pareek and Rao (1974a), Pestonjee (1986), and NCERT (1981) compiled psychological measures developed in India. Reports prepared by the University Grants Commission (UGC, 1968, 1982, 1999) deal with teaching and research programmes in universities. Some empirical studies (Adair, 1989) have examined the professional status of the discipline of psychology. More recently, Misra (2010), Salagame (2005, 2008), Pandey and Singh (2005), Paranjpe (2006) and Varma (2004) have provided incisive understanding of the current status of psychology in India. These publications have formed the basis of preparing this review chapter.

In brief, this chapter traces the genesis of scientific psychology in India in the beginning of the last century. It examines the constraints and creative pursuits of Indian psychologists in seeking a disciplinary identity. The present chapter is, in a way, an updated and completely revised version of the article initially published (Dalal, 1996). The major focus in this version is on the long and circuitous journey towards indigenization and on the emerging concern to root psychology in Indian traditions. Lastly, some conjectures are made about the possible directions in which psychology is likely to tread in the twenty first century.

Twentieth century psychology in India: A Western implant

Indian scriptures dating back thousands of years extensively dealt with the analysis of states of consciousness and contents of mental activities. The important feature of this early exposition is that it is mostly experiential and is a culmination of centuries-old tradition of self-verification. In the ancient Indian scriptures no rigid distinction among religion, philosophy and psychology was maintained. The overriding consideration was to help individuals in their pursuit of self-realization and liberation from the miseries of life. In this world-view, the source of all suffering was presumed to be within the person, and thus the emphasis was on exploring the 'world within', to alleviate suffering. The goal was to seek enduring harmony of spirit, mind and body for everlasting happiness. The *yoga* system evolved very sophisticated mind-control techniques in this pursuit. In contemporary literature, this broad field of inquiry is referred to as 'Indian Psychology'.

These rich traditions, however, had little bearing on academic psychology implanted in India as a Western science during the British colonial rule. Scientific psychology with laboratory work was a novel approach, not having any parallel in traditional Indian psychology. Psychology was first introduced as a subject in the Philosophy Department at Calcutta University. Brojendra Nath Seal, who was the then King George V Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy, drafted the first syllabus for experimental psychology and established a laboratory for demonstration purposes in 1905. Eleven years later this laboratory was upgraded as the first psychology department, the Department of Experimental Psychology. Narendra Nath Sengupta, who chaired this department, had his education at Harvard University with Hugo Munsterberg, a student of William Wundt. Laboratory research in Calcutta in the areas of depth perception, psychophysics and attention inspired early work at other centres. Recognizing the scientific nature of research, psychology was included as a separate section in the Indian Science Congress in 1923. Thus, psychology in India at an early stage acquired the status of a science along with physical and biological sciences, something which Western psychology achieved only after a long struggle. The Indian Psychological Association was founded in 1924; and the *Indian Journal of Psychology*, the first psychology journal in India, appeared the very next year.

Before these experimental traditions could consolidate, Sengupta left Calcutta. He was succeeded by Girindra Shekhar Bose. Being a medical doctor and a psychiatrist who was in close contact with Sigmund Freud, Bose showed much enthusiasm to promote psychoanalysis. In 1922 he founded the Indian Psychoanalytic Society, which two years later was affiliated with the International Psychoanalytic Society. Bose received his Ph.D. from Calcutta on the 'concept of repression'—the first Ph.D. from any Indian University in psychology. He established the Lumbini Park Mental Hospital in Calcutta in 1940; and in 1947 brought out a journal, *Samiksha*. The Department started an Applied Psychology Wing in 1938, when Jung, Meyers and Spearman were invited to the Silver Jubilee Session of the Indian Science Congress.

Prior to India's Independence from the British rule, other departments were established at Mysore and Patna. M. V. Gopalswami, who headed the Department at Mysore, was trained at London University with Spearman in the mental testing tradition. He developed Indian adaptations of Western intelligence tests and applied psychological principles in the field of education. Gopalswami was the first to set up an animal laboratory in India. The Department at Patna began in 1946, along with the Institute of Psychological Research and Services, headed by H. P. Maiti. Vocational guidance and counselling was provided to a large number of students and to the general public. Since Maiti was trained with Girindra Shekhar Bose, the orientation was psychoanalytic and clinical. In a short time, Patna emerged as a major centre for teaching, research and counselling services.

Research during this period was mainly in the areas of sensation, perception, psychophysics and reaction time, influenced by the work of Wundt and Titchner. Fascination for laboratory work and value-free research, based on the natural

science model, sustained the interest of Indian psychologists in these areas. Western research in these areas could easily be replicated without considering the cultural factors. In the area of social psychology, early work focussed on repeating Allport's experiments on social facilitation on Indian samples. An important work of this period was the rumour study by Prasad (1935). Prasad content-analysed the rumours doing the rounds during a major earthquake in northern India. He found that most rumours were anxiety-inducing, thereby justifying the fear experienced by earthquake victims. Festinger acknowledged that this work inspired his formulation of the cognitive dissonance theory (Cohen & Cohen, 1977).

Two worlds of Indian psychologists

The concepts and theories in Western psychology have their genesis in the social upheavals of Europe in the nineteenth century, with its metamorphosis from an agrarian to an industrial society. The discipline evolved to comprehend the complex social realities and the problems of industrialization. With the imperial expansion of modern capitalism, the influence of Western knowledge in the colonized societies was inevitable. The popularity of English-medium education made writings of Western thinkers accessible to Indian scholars. A large body of this knowledge was alien, even in contradiction to that which was prevalent in the colonized traditional societies. The contradictions were more glaring in colonies, like India, having a strong sense of cultural identity and a rich heritage of scholarly work.

In the West, psychology had moved away from theology and philosophy, and had developed its own methods of inquiry based on the natural science models. Indian psychologists saw that in applying Western psychology there was an opportunity of developing a secular identity distinct from that of religion and philosophy, which was not possible within indigenous intellectual traditions integrating philosophy, spirituality and psychology. Moreover, due to the neglect of many centuries, Indian psychology was not well equipped to examine the contemporary world and did not have tools to explain the existing social and moral decay of the Indian society. There were no new concepts, theories and methods in Indian psychology applicable to the changing individual and social order.

Alignment with Western positivism gave Indian psychologists an opportunity to make a fresh beginning. The emerging scientific discipline of psychology gave rise to some hope of generating radically different explanations of the prolonged colonial rule. There were exciting possibilities of making important discoveries about Indian people and society. Also, one could hope that the explanations of positive science would provide the much needed respectability to Indian cultural practices and rituals. At the personal level, it gave a new respectability to the upwardly mobile psychology professionals who mostly hailed from the upper-class, Western-educated elite. Although, as Nandy (1995) stated in the context of Girindra Shekhar Bose, there was an awareness that the sectoral and uni-dimensional approach of academic psychology cannot yield in-depth analysis of the socio-psychological

problems of Indian society, it could also not establish durable links with Indian traditions and belief systems.

Nandy (1995) further stated: 'As a result, the usual encounter between an ancient culture with its distinctive culture of science and an exogenous science with its own distinctive culture fractured the self-definition not only of Bose but of many others involved in the similar enterprise' (p. 83). Caught between the two worlds, Indian psychologists always had a problem in balancing between a number of polarities: metaphysical versus empirical; clinical versus experimental; intuitive versus objective. The Indian mind, even if trained to be a scientist, often finds it difficult to ruthlessly pursue the objective reality, something which comes perhaps naturally to a Westerner. Thus, conflicting elements are resolved into a suspension rather than a solution. 'The aesthetic satisfaction of a Hindu myth resides in full savoring of both the extremes rather than seeking a synthesis' (Kakar, 1982, p. 11). Indian psychologists compartmentalized their work in the Western psychological tradition from other scholarly and personally satisfying creative pursuits. They simultaneously lived in two different worlds without any significant overlap.

How Indian psychologists before Independence lived in two different worlds can be illustrated with some examples. Sir Brojendra Nath Seal, who established the first psychology laboratory in the country to promote experimental psychology, was a great historian of ancient Indian science and the inspiration for Jadunath Sinha to bring out his monumental work on Indian psychology. N. N. Sengupta, who was trained to be an experimental psychologist, had a large number of non-empirical papers in scientific journals. His writings covered the whole range from the psychology of mysticism to the psychology of Western dance. Sengupta did not stay in Calcutta for long and joined the Philosophy Department at Lucknow University. There he co-authored a book, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, with an eminent sociologist, Radhakamal Mukherjee, in 1928. The orientation of this book was more sociological than psychological. As Rajanarayan (1983) wrote in his biographical note, he turned religious and got interested in mystical traditions and published work in this area. Girindra Shekhar Bose had, along with his important work in the area of psychoanalysis, serialized an interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* in the prestigious Bengali magazine, *Pravasi*, without any direct reference to psychoanalytic concepts (Nandy, 1995). Bose also wrote a long commentary on sacred Indian texts in Bengali, titled *Purana Pravesa*. Gopalswami, who was at Mysore, came from an affluent background and maintained interest in two diverse fields—intelligence testing and animal laboratory work; besides, he also had his own private radio station and was involved in various cultural activities.

These illustrations are cited to give some clues about how Indian psychologists managed to live simultaneously in two worlds with little overlap. Thus it is no surprise that Indian psychologists remained apolitical all along. There is no reflection in their work of the predominant social and political movements, even that of the freedom movement. Indian psychologists remained on the edge of the society, as far as their professional activities were concerned. Their research lacked

continuity, commitment and conviction. The situation changed only marginally after Independence.

Durganand Sinha, who may be considered as one of the architects of modern Indian psychology has observed in his prolific writings that early attempts at formulation of Indian Psychology were rejected by psychologists in India who were trained in the empirical tradition, because of such notions like rebirth, transmigration of souls and supernatural powers. It was considered as 'glib talk', 'revivalism' and 'uncritical worship of the past', and the term Indian Psychology acquired a 'pejorative connotation'. So what is 'spiritual psychology' for Western academicians becomes 'revivalism' for Indian academicians! Reasons for such resistance and rejection of psychology grounded in traditional ideas is primarily due to the negative attitude that we have inherited from our colonial past on the one hand and the influence of the scientific worldview on the other (Dalal, 2002; Paranjpe, 2002).

It may be argued that a vast majority of Indian psychologists have shied away from Indian psychological perspectives because of this attitude, and the religio-philosophical context in which those perspectives are embedded. But, paradoxically, a majority of them share the same socio-cultural context with the rest of the Indian population, and are guided by the same religio-philosophical perspectives which have shaped the attitudes, emotions, motivations, morals and values of the Indian masses in their day-to-day living! As K. Kiran Kumar Salagame (2008) observed, this situation has created some kind of a split in the personality—psychologist as a professional vs. psychologist as a person—and it has contributed to a lack of creativity and originality and draining of personal resources and energy resulting in 'burn out' among many. A psychologist in his role as a scientist conducts the professional activities with one set of assumptions and beliefs and as a person lives and acts with another set of assumptions and beliefs among fellow humans.

One reason why Indian psychologists could live in two parallel worlds was probably because the colonial rulers did not see much utility of psychology in consolidating their empire. This, for example, was not true in the case of sociology and social anthropology, which had much to contribute to the smooth functioning of the colonial administration in India (Dhanangare, 1985). Indian culture and society was totally unfamiliar to the colonial officials when they first arrived. The unique systems of caste, religion, tribal and rural communities, rituals, beliefs, traditions were all baffling to an Englishman. These had no parallel in the experiences of the Western societies. Thus, in the absence of proper understanding of Indian social realities the colonial administrators were facing many problems in their smooth functioning. There was much urgency and support for research on these topics. Neither Indian psychology nor Western psychological research held any such promise and were largely ignored. It is understandable why the British did not promote psychology in India in the same way they did sociology and social anthropology, for instance.

In fact, Indian culture with its liberal and multiple traditions did not offer resistance to this new emerging science. In the West, Descartean philosophy had

to face opposition from theology for a long time. Psychoanalysis had a very controversial entry into Western society; many of the books by Freud were initially banned. In India psychoanalysis was accepted without anyone raising an eyebrow. The three main streams of academic psychology in India—experimental psychology, psychoanalysis and intelligence testing—were viewed as culture-free, justifying uncritical borrowing from the West.

The fact that psychologists in India lived in two worlds did not change much after Independence, but rather became more pronounced. In most universities, psychology departments were established by splitting the departments of philosophy. As a result, a large number of philosophy faculty moved to the newly formed psychology departments; many who opted for psychology were those who saw better career opportunities in the new departments. This movement from philosophy to psychology was so pervasive that by the end of the 1960s a majority of the chairpersons in psychology departments had a philosophy background. In the normal course this could have given a strong philosophical knowledge base to psychology, making it richer in terms of indigenous concepts and theories. But this did not happen. In their enthusiasm to establish a new identity as scientists, these faculty members with a background in philosophy completely dissociated themselves from their parent discipline. They were more fascinated by the idea of value-free and culturally-neutral experimental work. The areas they showed interest in were areas such as memory, psychophysics, perception, learning and pattern recognition, which could be studied without bringing in the cultural context. These faculty members from philosophy had little training in research methodology. Their major quest, therefore, was to acquire methodological sophistication and mastery over statistical techniques. In the process they became ardent adherents of Western research methods. Thus, despite their firm moorings in ancient Indian psychology, psychology in India did not reap the fruits of this unique advantage. Indian psychologists were still coexisting in two different worlds. As professionals they were engaged in scientific research based on Western models but to satisfy their creative urges they would engage in other activities. This Indian experience was not an exception in this respect. In neighbouring Pakistan (Ansari, 1990) and Bangladesh (Hamida Begam, 1990) it was the same story, as in many other former European colonies.

Living in two different worlds had at least two major implications for the growth of psychology. One, psychologists did not engage in thematic research over a long period of time. They kept hopping from one area to another and did not sustain their interest in one theme. Often extrinsic factors—such as funds or opportunities—became more decisive factors for conducting research, than any intrinsic interest in the topic. Even a cursory glance at their published works would reveal that most of the Indian psychologists had covered a wide range of topics. It could be baffling to a Western researcher, but in India it is a normal practice. Researchers did not cultivate any theoretical interest, or adhere to a particular theoretical position in their research. There are few Indian researchers whose work has a cumulative effect. Two, the professional bodies of Indian psychologists rarely

took any stand on vital national issues. They were more interested in holding annual conferences and meetings, where rarely substantive issues were passionately debated. Most of the conflicts that weakened these professional organizations were of an interpersonal nature. There was no larger vision of the psychology to be.

Initiatives towards socially relevant research

India's Independence from the colonial rule in 1947 did bring changes in the content and concerns of psychological research. The National Government recognized the importance of social science teaching and research in attaining the objectives of national reconstruction and social development. There was much hope and expectation about the role that the social sciences could play in this endeavour. Psychologists began to realize that they have a responsibility to engage in socially relevant research.

As an example, psychologists responded to the human tragedy of the partition of India. In its aftermath, thousands were killed in communal riots, followed by a massive influx of refugees from across the border. Many psychological studies of that period evidenced this concern in the rioting behaviour of the masses. Realizing the urgent need of research in this area, the Ministry of Education procured the services of Gardner Murphy through UNESCO in 1950 to develop a research programme to investigate the causes of communal violence. Many Indian psychologists collaborated on this project which culminated in the book, *In the Minds of Men*, edited by Murphy in 1953. They continued working in this area in later years.

Another area which emerged during this period, but was not sustained in the later decades, is counselling and guidance. The guidance bureau at Patna inspired the establishment of similar bureaus in other states. The UP Psychological Bureau was among the first ones, established in 1947. This bureau, under the leadership of Sohan Lal and thereafter of C. M. Bhatia and S. N. Mehrotra, adapted many intelligence and aptitude tests in Hindi, and provided counselling services to the public. The Bihar Psychological Bureau, under the guidance of Mohsin, worked on similar lines. In Bombay, the Parsi Panchayat Vocational Guidance Bureau provided services to students, as well as to referred cases. The Bureau also brought out the *Journal of Vocational and Educational Guidance*. This journal played an important role in furthering the guidance movement in this country. However, the social and political conditions were just not ripe for the expansion of this movement; and not enough of a research base was built up to sustain this movement. Consequently, instead of growing, the movement lost its momentum (D. Sinha, 1986). The first two ICSSR surveys of research in psychology are testimony to the fact that this area did not yield much research in later years.

A new development after Independence was the growth of psychology outside the university system. The Ahmedabad Textile Industries Research Association (ATIRA) was established in 1950, where Kamla Chowdhury conducted large-scale surveys to study motivational problems in the textile industries. Erikson and McClelland were frequent visitors to this Institute. In the clinical field, advanced

training programmes were introduced at the All India Institute of Mental Health (now known as the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences, NIMHANS) in 1955, followed by the Hospital for Mental Diseases in Ranchi (1962). The Indian armed forces also showed interest in using psychological tests in personnel selection. For this, the Psychological Research Wing of the Defence Science Organization was set up in 1949. The aim of this wing was not only to help in the selection of army personnel, but also to do research on the whole range of defence-related problems, such as motivation and morale of the armed forces, leadership, mental health, stress, rehabilitation of disabled war veterans and development of psychological tests. Later on, this wing was elevated as the Defence Institute of Psychological Research, employing a large number of psychologists.

These efforts and opportunities signify the contribution which psychology could make in different domains of national life. Psychology as a discipline was somehow not prepared to seize these initiatives. The poor training and replicative nature of research did not prepare them to confront real life problems. A few psychologists did participate in developmental programmes, but overall the discipline remained on the margin. It was the time when other social scientists, for example, sociologists and economists had already started making their presence felt.

Rapid but unplanned expansion

In the 1950s and 1960s, the growth of psychology in Indian universities was phenomenal. In 1956 the University Grants Commission (UGC) was constituted and it provided funds to various universities to start psychology departments. As a result, the number of psychology departments increased to thirty-two by the end of the 1960s.

This rapid expansion of psychology, though impressive, was quite unplanned. In the absence of any definite educational policy of the government, these departments were often created as a part of the general expansion of higher education and at times without any particular academic considerations. No serious thinking preceded in establishing these departments in terms of their need-based specialization. Nevertheless, in the course of their growth many departments developed a distinct identity (R. E. Pandey, 1969). For example, departments became known for their research in the areas of rural and social psychology (Allahabad), test construction (Mysore), industrial psychology (Osmania), measurement and guidance (Patna) or verbal learning (Poona). Most departments developed around one dominant scholar, usually the person heading the department. His interest and training were decisive factors in the specialization of that department. Psychology during those days (this is more or less true even today) developed around personalities, and when those scholars departed, many centres collapsed, or showed shifts in specialization.

In the late 1960s, concerned about the declining standards of university departments and to facilitate research programmes, the UGC started a new scheme of Centres for Advanced Studies and Centres for Special Assistance. Under these

schemes two psychology departments (at Utkal and Allahabad) were elevated to the status of Centres of Advanced Studies in Psychology. The idea was to develop some departments as research centres at par with the best in the world, with the help of liberal government support. Departments at Delhi, Gorakhpur and Tirupati were also elevated to the status of Centres of Special Assistance, a penultimate stage to receiving Advanced Centre status. These departments were expected to provide leadership in the areas of research, teaching and professional activities.

Though the practice of going abroad for higher education was there since long, a significant development after Independence was the beginning of a number of educational exchange programmes. The most sought after were the fellowships of Commonwealth, Fulbright and Ford Foundation. A number of bilateral academic exchange programmes were commissioned by UGC and the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Under these schemes a large number of Indian scholars went to Britain, Canada, and the United States for doctoral and post-doctoral training in the 1960s and 1970s. When they returned to occupy academic positions, they not only had better training in research techniques but also brought along contemporary research ideas, and continued academic collaboration with their seminal professors abroad. This brought qualitative changes in teaching and research. Under these exchange programmes many Western scholars also visited Indian universities. Psychology in India was dominated by the scholars trained abroad for another two decades. Equipped with freshly acquired expertise in Western theories and methods, they exhibited much interest in applying their knowledge to understand and solve Indian social problems.

Another new development was the expansion of teaching of psychology in various professional courses in the fields of engineering, agriculture, management and medical sciences. All Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) have departments of Humanities and Social Sciences, of which psychology is a constituent subject with Ph.D. programmes. All Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) have departments of Organizational Behaviour. Psychology is taught in undergraduate classes, particularly in Home Science and Extension Education departments in twenty-six agricultural universities and twenty-eight agriculture institutes. In medical colleges, psychology is part of a course on Preventive and Social Medicine. But as noted by Atal (1976), most of these courses in agriculture and medicine are taught by the junior staff, research assistants and demonstrators, and have low priority. The situation has not changed much till date.

Expansion of psychology departments within the university system continued in the 1970s. However, it became increasingly difficult to conduct research in the university departments. In a bureaucratic university set up, there was little organizational support for pursuing research projects. Again, due to the mass entry of students in higher education and chronic campus unrest for political reasons, the academic environment was on the decline. Heavy teaching, and no incentive for research had a telling effect on the research output of the universities. As a result, research in psychology started growing outside the university system. Psychologists having research inclinations preferred to join various research institutes.

A. N. S. Institute of Social Studies, Patna, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, and the National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad, are some examples of prominent institutes which became centres of research in psychology.

Many governmental and autonomous institutions, such as the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute of Educational Policy and Administration (NIEPA), National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW) (all in Delhi), Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Academic Staff College, Hyderabad, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, have become centres of applied research in different fields of psychology. There are a large number of national and international voluntary agencies which seek the services of psychologists to carry out their research and field projects.

The consolidation of Western research

Two major streams of research, experimental and testing, continued to grow after Independence. The experimental work in the areas of perception, learning and memory was primarily replications of Western studies. There are some good examples of long-term research programmes. Chatterjee (1954) conducted experiments for almost two decades on the role of intensity, time interval and distance between stimuli in producing an optimal apparent movement. Tayal (1970) proposed a broad unifying model through which a number of related visual phenomena could be explained by a new set of principles, challenging the theoretical basis of Fechner's law. In the area of verbal conditioning, J. P. Das (1962) proposed that semantic satiation is a direct function of attentional decrement rather than of inhibition of meaning. Kothurkar (1972) did a series of studies on verbal learning and memory processes. Experimental work in comparative psychology was pioneered by S. D. Singh (1963) who studied the social behaviour of rhesus monkeys. Though M. Singh at Mysore and S. K. Misra at Bhubaneshwar continued working in this area, comparative psychology did not take off at other centres of higher learning.

Research in the area of psychological testing made a quantum leap after Independence. The orientation was still predominantly British. Those who could go abroad for graduate training generally went to London and Edinburgh (Barnett, 1955). They were trained in the mental testing traditions of Spearman and Thomson. On their return, these psychologists were preoccupied with the assessment of intelligence by preparing Indian adaptations of Spearman, Binet-Simon, Stanford-Binet and Terman-Merrill scales in Indian languages. A large number of Christian missionaries were also involved in the construction and validation of psychological tests for their mission schools (Mitra, 1972). Puhan (1994), in his presidential address to the 5th Annual Convention of National Academy of Psychology, critically reviewed the history of the personality test movement in India.

Work at early stages in this area dealt with construction and standardization of achievement and intelligence tests, aptitude scales and personality inventories.

Many popular Western tests were adapted into Indian languages. The National Council of Educational Research and Training reviewed all the tests that had been prepared up to 1961 (NCERT, 1966). A large number of these tests were adaptations of Western tests. In the directory compiled by Pareek and Rao (1974a), of the 503 tests, 218 were in the section of personality. Within personality, one out of five tests was related to motivational variables. Even among those classified within the general category, a large number were multidimensional personality tests, or measures of one or more motivational variables. The motivational tests were primarily in the domains of achievement motivation, anxiety, level of aspiration and self-concept.

A few general observations hold for the majority of these tests. First, most of the tests require certain language skills and thus are appropriate only for urban, educated samples. Half of the tests listed in Pareek and Rao's (1974a) directory were for school- and college-level students. Second, classical psychometric theory guided the construction of almost all of these tests which, owing to sub-cultural and language differences merit a fresh look at their usefulness. Third, there has been a general neglect in establishing the validity of these tests. More than 85% of the tests included in the *Handbook* had indeed no information regarding test validity. Thus, though a large number of tests were developed in India, their quality left much to be desired. The *Second Handbook* of tests by Pestonjee (1986) showed considerable improvement. The 326 tests developed in the preceding decade showed the similar trend as in the first *Handbook* with two differences. First, more than 60% of the tests were reported with validity data, and secondly, there were more Indian tests after adaptations of Western tests.

Using these tests, a large number of surveys were undertaken to investigate the prevalence of mental health problems by Sethi and his associates (Sethi, Gupta, & Kumar, 1967; Sethi, Gupta, Kumar, & Promilla, 1972) in Lucknow, by Dube (1970) in Agra, by Elnager, Mitra and Rao (1971) in rural Bengal, and by Verghese (1973) in Vellore. There were very few in-depth studies of the problem areas. Research work in the areas of epidemiology of mental illness, phenomenology of depressive behaviour, drug abuse, yoga and health, psychosocial aspects of family planning, and mental retardation was slowly gathering momentum by the seventies (see G. G. Prabhu, 1980). In the area of clinical psychology, most of the research activities were confined to diagnosis and prognosis of mental diseases. Wig and Akhtar (1974) have reviewed the important psychiatric research in India conducted during 1947–1972. Murthy (1980) observed that Western influence was significant in the use of clinical techniques, such as sensitization, aversion therapy, feedback therapy, and classical and operant conditioning techniques in treatment of psychogenic illnesses. Behavioural therapies were quite popular and though psychoanalysis was still practiced, its popularity was on the decline. Recently, interest has grown in examining traditional healing practices in the treatment of mental illnesses (for example, Swami Rama, S. Ballentine, & Swami Ajay, 1976; Kakar, 1982). The area which has emerged more recently is health psychology (Dalal, 2001)—to study the role of psychological and cultural factors in affecting health behaviour.

An applied field that began to grow after Independence was industrial psychology. Rapid industrialization in the 1950s and 1960s created a need for better understanding of the labour–management relationship and organizational efficiency. Psychological research projects on job attitude, work incentive, absenteeism and job satisfaction were quite popular till the 1970s. Ganguli's (1961) book, *Industrial Productivity and Motivation*, is an example of the concerns of that period. With the launching of many self-employment schemes by the Central Government in the 1960s, the research focus shifted to developing training programmes for inculcating entrepreneurship. McClelland's theory of achievement motivation (1961) provided the basis for launching a unique experiment to impart training for achievement at the Small Industries Extension Training Institute, Hyderabad. The findings of this innovative training were not conclusive, and eventually Indian psychologists lost interest in such experimentation.

With the shift in research from industrial to organizational behaviour, the interest grew in studying all spheres of organized work activities. Research on the influence of socio-economic factors and traditional culture on organizational functioning started attracting Indian psychologists. The two chapters—by Padaki on job attitudes and by Khandawala on organizational effectiveness—in the *Third Survey* (Pareek,1988) cover a large number of Indian work in these areas.

Communal and caste conflicts being perennial problems in India, social prejudice, intergroup relations and socialization of the Indian child emerged as major research interest. Rath and Sircar (1960) and Anant (1970) studied caste stereotypes. Paranjpe's (1970) book *Caste Prejudice and the Individual*, was based on a survey of college students' prejudice against low-caste members. The studies of attitude towards the Chinese (A. K. P. Sinha & Upadhyaya, 1960) are oft-quoted studies of change in attitude as a result of historical events (border dispute with China which led to war). A. K. Singh (1981) examined development of religious identity and prejudice in children, and more recently, Deridder and Tripathi (1992) studied social consequences of norm violation by different ethnic groups. Work in the field of socialization and child rearing practices in India has also been substantial. Two field studies that inspired many studies of the early period are by Carstairs (1957), and by Minturn and Hitchcock (1966). Work on similar lines has been carried out by Anandlakshmy (1975, 1982) and others. Kakar (1978) examined socialization and child rearing in light of the elaborate system of rituals and practices prevalent in Hindu culture. Saraswathi (1987) brought out an annotated bibliography of the work done in India in the preceding decade.

To take stock of the state of research, Ganguli (1971) reviewed about 2,000 research publications of the period 1920 to 1967. He found that the five most important areas of work in order of importance were social (15.9%), experimental (13.7%), mental testing (13.0%), general (10.6%) and industrial (3.6%). An analysis of the publications by Mitra (1972) showed that areas of clinical, social, personality and experimental psychology accounted for half of the total number of publications examined. In a similar analysis, twenty-two years later, J. B. P. Sinha (1993) reported that clinical, social, personality and industrial-organizational psychology

accounted for 70% of all the publications. The overall growth rate of research publications was 5.57% in the 1950s, 14.28% in the 1960s and 46.22% in the 1970s. Dalal and Sharma (1990) examined the growth pattern of research for the period 1972–1986 by content-analysing the abstracts included in 'Indian Psychological Abstracts' in the areas of social psychology and personality. It is interesting to note that in personality research, in the initial period (1972–1976), one-fourth of the studies used the experimental method, the use of which declined in later years. In social psychology, only 13% of the studies employed the experimental method, which remained the same in the following years. In personality research, there were an increasingly large number of theoretical papers, whereas in social research, questionnaire method became more popular over the years. The use of student population in this research was much less than that found in Western research.

A crisis of identity

In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of review papers were published to take stock of the contributions made by Indian psychologists, and of the emerging trends. Interestingly, these appraisals of research publications brought home this realization that psychology in India is mostly a poor imitation of Western research and does not lead to understanding Indian social reality. A crisis was perceptible in the discipline in the mid-1970s, as many felt that Indian psychology was going nowhere. The following passages present a brief account of this crisis of direction and progress.

By the mid-1970s, the enthusiasm with which the Western-educated Indian psychologists were conducting research was waning. Indian scholars were getting restive, as Western psychology was failing to throw light on Indian social issues. Sixty years of Western psychology in India had not yielded any significant discoveries. Nandy (1974) argued: 'Indian psychology has become not merely imitative and subservient but also dull and replicative' (p. 5). K. G. Agrawal (1973) called psychology in India as 'adoptology'. There was growing disillusionment about the applicability of Western theories and their mindless testing in India. The failure to resolve inner conflicts of cherishing Indian cultural values at the personal level and maintaining high standards of objectivity at the professional level was reflected in methodologically sophisticated but socially irrelevant research. As a result, Indian psychologists were increasingly marginalized in the society. A strong need was felt to return to the cultural roots. D. Sinha (1977) urged that the scientific understanding of Indian social reality should benefit from its vast treasure of traditional psychological knowledge accumulated over centuries. He called for the development of an indigenous psychology with its own paradigms to understand developmental problems of the region. In short, psychology in India was seeking its own identity.

What will make psychology more relevant in the Indian context? In the concluding chapter of the *Second Survey of Research in Psychology*, Pareek (1981) considered psychology in India as standing at the 'cross-roads'. He discussed many

referents of relevance, namely, conceptual, methodological, professional, and socio-cultural, in order to build the capability of the discipline to respond to the needs of the society. There are not many pointers that the situation had changed since then. D. Sinha (1986) also stressed on finding appropriate theoretical framework and research methodologies to make the subject 'socially relevant to meet the needs of a changing society' (p. 63). J. Pandey (1988), in the *Third Survey of Research in Psychology*, responding to Pareek's comment, concluded that psychology is outgrowing the alien models and 'probably psychology is not strictly standing at the cross-roads' (p. 354). In the *Fourth Survey*, J. Pandey (2001, 2002, 2004) reported the progress of indigenous psychology by citing important publications. However, as Pandey (2004) noted, '[t]hough these examples of indigenous efforts are laudable, the question remains whether this emerging trend has succeeded in influencing mainstream psychology (bulk of psychology) in terms of academic programmes of teaching and research' (pp. 347–348).

The ongoing debate did result in some noticeable change in the content and quality of Indian research. Indian psychologists were showing more interest in studying problems relevant to the country using Indian concepts and theories. Neki (1973), for example, suggested a teacher–pupil model in clinical counselling to break cultural and social barriers. J. B. P. Sinha (1980) proposed a new leadership style—nurturant task-master, which is more likely to succeed in Indian work organizations. Kakar (1982, 1991) studied the role of traditional healers in maintaining mental health in Indian society. Ramchandra Rao (1983), and Palsane, Bhavasari, Goswami and Evans (1986), developed a concept of stress based on ancient scriptures. Pande and Naidu (1992) developed a measure to study the concept of detachment and its mental health consequences.

However, this crisis of the discipline's identity was of concern for only a handful of psychologists. J. B. P. Sinha (1993) made a distinction between the bulk and the front of psychological research. Not much has changed in the mass-produced bulk of the research which is still replicative and imitative. However, as a response to a long debate and changing global scenario, the front-runners have started taking indigenous psychology more seriously. As argued by Manasi Kumar (2006), the inertia and lackadaisical stance of Indian psychologists towards attending to relevant social problems continued, and their rigidities in exploring new epistemologies and cross-fertilizations within and outside the discipline led to further replication of outdated and a-contextual Western psychological researches. Sitting rather too comfortably in the pigeon holes of the University departments, which do not mirror socio-cultural realities of the common man in India, psychologists have increasingly chosen to remain insular and self-absorbed. Even during the times when social sciences were revamping and scrutinizing their colonial baggage, essentially during the seventies and early eighties, Indian psychologists remained far from this self-reflexive, deconstructive enterprise that was in many ways deeply political in character and calling.

Again, the efforts to investigate indigenous concepts and theories were fragmented and did not show any long-term research commitment. It is heartening

to find research articles employing Indian concepts, but these are mostly one-time affairs lacking in in-depth analysis. The best examples of thematic research over a long period have still employed Western models (for example, Kanekar, 1988; R. Singh, 1986). Relevant in this context is the fact that major funding agencies play an important role in setting the priority areas of research endeavours. The UGC, NCERT and ICSSR particularly, have shaped the nature and direction of research in the past four decades. A perusal of the research projects sanctioned by the ICSSR shows that whereas between 1969 and 1972 no research project on tribal communities was funded, between 1982 and 1985, 27% of the projects financed were tribal studies. This explains the spurt of research in this area in the last decade.

A journey toward indigenous psychology

The core of indigenization is the belief that all knowledge, including that of psychology, is rooted in the prevalent world-view of a community and is conditioned by historical and socio-cultural factors. D. Sinha (1994) discussed in detail the indigenization of psychology in India. He refers to two facets of indigenization. The first is purely the product of culture, the concepts and categories which are culture-bound. The second is the product of the interaction of cultural variables with concepts, theories and methods introduced from outside. J. B. P. Sinha (2002) has referred to these two as endogenous and exogenous indigenization. He further expanded the domain by referring to two variants of each kind of indigenization. The first one is a relatively more purist one, having more proximity either to the psycho-spiritual Indian thought system, or to the positivistic mainstream Western psychology. The second variant accepts the salience of the traditions, but maintains greater flexibility in choosing concepts, theories and methods. They differ mainly in terms of their allegiance to either Indian systems of thought, or to Western psychology. Taken together they can encompass the whole range of indigenization in Indian psychological research. Misra and Mohanty's (2002) edited book, *Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology*, is a good anthology of research in this area.

Taking the lead from the above discussion, it is argued in this chapter that indigenous research has moved along two different streams. One considers indigenization as a gradual process. A majority of psychologists in India are trained in Western models, and for them it is not feasible to make any sudden shift towards indigenously developed theories and methods. It is but natural for them to continue using concepts and tests borrowed from the West, albeit with increasing sensitivity to the cultural context. The same trend is observable in many other developing countries as well (Marriott, 1992).

The Canadian psychologist, John Adair, saw indigenization as a gradual process, and, in collaboration with his Indian colleagues, developed a scale to measure the degree of indigenization. Adair (1989) operationalized indigenization in terms of: (a) cultural sensitivity of researcher in designing a study and discussing its findings, (b) citation from one's own culture, (c) problem orientation, (d) development

of culture-based concepts, theories and methods, (e) culturally anchored tests, and (f) cross-cultural comparisons. Adair and colleagues concluded on the basis of content analysis of a sample of over 300 journal articles that there was progress in indigenization of psychology in India, albeit at a slow pace (Adair, Puhan & Vohra, 1993). It is important to note in this context that, as Adair and others clarify, their focus is on the indigenization of an 'imported discipline', and not on 'endogenous development' of psychology based on indigenous sources.

Viewing retrospectively, this line of thinking led to the development of three streams of research: problem-oriented research, cross-cultural psychology and Indian psychology. In the 1970s and later too, there was excitement about Western theories, which held promises of dealing with the problems in the Indian setting. The main argument was that psychological knowledge should contribute to solving the problems of developing societies. Reviewing relevant Indian work, J. B. P. Sinha (1973) examined the methodological challenges in conducting problem-oriented research. Studies of political behaviour (Mehta, 1975), developmental norms for pre-school children (Murlidharan, 1971), change in level of aspiration and motivation of farmers (D. Sinha, 1969), prolonged deprivation (Misra & Tripathi, 1980), health modernity (A. K. Singh, 1983) are examples of such research. Pareek and Rao (1974b) reviewed researches in the field of family planning and presented a conceptual model of fertility-regulating behaviour. This concern of studying Indian problems is visible in a number of later studies. It was also realized that Western theories and methods could not be fruitfully applied to study Indian social problems. In the absence of any cumulative knowledge based on cultural understanding and field-testing, these studies did not yield any real insight and solutions of the Indian social problems needed for theoretical and methodological breakthroughs.

A parallel development was cross-cultural testing of psychological concepts and theories. For Indian psychologists who always showed an international orientation, it was an opportunity to operate on a wider plane and to influence developments in mainstream psychology. The cross-cultural movement found natural patronage in India and a large number of Indian psychologists joined this international movement. They occupied important positions in the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology, and played a prominent role in augmenting this movement. However, as noted by D. Sinha (1997), the cross-cultural work only led to testing of Western theories on Indian samples. Very rarely studies originated from the needs of the Indian society or tested Indian concepts in other cultures. Indiscriminate search for cultural differences and similarities made such ventures superficial, without providing much understanding of the culture or the contemporary problems of Indian society. To a large extent cross-cultural psychology remained a methodological enterprise and culture remained a peripheral concern (Misra & Gergen, 1993). In recent years, cross-cultural psychology itself is going through a crisis and the classical conception of culture, that was the basis of most research in this area, is being seriously questioned (Miller, 1998).

The third stream is that of indigenous psychology. At the core of indigenization is the belief that all psychological knowledge is rooted in the prevalent

worldview of a society and is conditioned by its historical and meta-theoretical considerations. D. Sinha (1994) has talked about two types of indigenization. The first is an outcome of adaptation of the mainstream (Western) psychology in a different cultural setup. This adaptation is along the lines argued by John Adair. A large body of research in India can be included in this kind of indigenization in which cultural concepts and practices are examined, employing Western theories and approaches. The other kind of indigenization is that which is based on a systematic analysis of the culture-bound concepts and categories. Such indigenization focuses on the contemporary relevance of cultural heritage and native theories, and is termed 'Indian Psychology'. This stream has primarily relied on the rich storehouse of knowledge found in Indian scriptures and philosophical texts of the last two to three millennia. The work of Kakar (1991, 2003, 2008) can be cited as a good example of research which finely blends these two streams of indigenization.

Indian psychology has developed around the existential quest to overcome human suffering and in the process to raise the person to higher levels of awareness and achievement. Thus, Indian psychology endeavours not only to provide an understanding of the nature of a person, the causes and consequences of his conduct, but also to explore the methods and means of transforming the person in pursuit of perfection in being, certainty in knowing and happiness in feeling. Indian psychology focuses on the inner self, which is accessible through subjective methods of self-verification. The beginning of Indian psychology can be traced in the writings of many eminent thinkers, such as Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, in the early part of the last century. The monumental work of Jadunath Sinha (1934/1958; 1961) on Indian psychology can be considered as a landmark in formally establishing it as an independent discipline. The books of Ramachandra Rao (1962) and Ragunath Safaya (1975) gave it further impetus during the early years. These efforts to rejuvenate psychology in the ancient texts intensified in the 1980s and 1990s. Some notable publications of this period are by Paranjpe (1984, 1998), Chakraborty (1995), Saraswathi (1999) and K. Ramakrishna Rao (1988, 2002, 2005). There is a rich and growing body of research in this area and many excellent reviews are available. This stream has built not only on the interpretation of traditional concepts and theories in contemporary idiom, but also on their integration within a broader, global perspective. Cornelissen (2000, 2005) has pleaded that psychological knowledge from the Indian spiritual tradition needs to be integrated in the teaching programmes. According to him, the core of the curriculum could be Indian theories of self and consciousness.

Psychology in the new millennium

Clearly, by the turn of this new millennium, the academic scenario is changing in India. The scientific community is better prepared now than in the past to accept a psychology rooted in native wisdom and philosophical traditions. Psychologists in India are increasingly aware of the wide gap between their academic pursuits and the real-life problems of people. The replicative nature of research endeavours,

antiquated and obsolete teaching programmes, and lack of applied orientation have devoid the discipline of any professional momentum. Indian psychologists want to break free from the theoretical and methodological constraints of the discipline to grapple with the real issues of development and to act as social catalysts in the change process. Indian psychologists are also aware that if they fail to take up the challenge, they are likely to be completely marginalized.

The concern over the dominance of American psychology and attempts to develop psychology appropriate to indigenous cultures and societies is common not only to the third world countries but also to the second world countries of Europe (Moghaddam, 1987). The need for developing indigenous perspectives of one's culture has been felt by psychologists in many countries in all the continents. Thus it is not a culture-specific phenomenon, limited to a few Asian societies. Indian psychology is indigenous psychology in that it is a psychology derived from indigenous thought systems and therefore is clearly best suited to address India's specific psychological issues and problems. It is, however, more than indigenous psychology for the reason that it offers psychological models and theories appropriate to address problems of social conflicts, violence and mental health in other societies also.

Four factors have contributed to this change of attitudes and perceptions of Indian psychology. First, is the failure of Western psychology to deal with its own societal problems. It has increasingly been realized that positivistic psychology only provides a fragmented and superficial understanding of human feelings and behaviour. Growing problems such as social and family violence, mental health and moral decay have brought out the gross limitations of mainstream Western psychology. Humanistic and transpersonal movements in the 1960s have been the protest movements against brute empiricism in psychological research. A need was felt to bring back spirituality and religiosity in psychological research, which were banished from psychology for almost 150 years (see special issue of the *American Psychologist*, January 2004). All these contemporary developments are in response to the acutely felt limitations of psychology developed within the framework of modern science, which led to new ways of thinking in terms of feminism, social constructionism, postmodernism and the like, which are much closer to Eastern philosophies. The movement toward positive psychology (Snyder & Lopez, 2002) also has many ingredients of Indian psychology.

Second, is the growing popularity of *yoga* and other spiritual systems of India in the West. In the past few decades more and more people with spiritual training and experiences from India have been visiting other countries and have acquired a large following. They have been responsible for disseminating the Indian spiritual tradition. Among them, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Swami Rama are some prominent gurus who have been able to draw the attention of academic psychologists. Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga and Integral Psychology attracted worldwide attention. Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation went through rigorous experimental testing at Harvard and many other universities. Swami Rama offered himself to extensive medical testing at the Meninger Foundation Laboratory, New York, where he demonstrated many yogic feats. These Indian masters were able

to demonstrate convincingly the power of mind over body and have contributed significantly towards evoking interest in the Indian psychological perspectives. Publications of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry, and the Himalayan International Institute for Yoga Sciences, Philosophy, and Religion in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, founded by Swami Rama, are valuable for their significant contributions in expounding the psychological insights of the *Vedānta*, *Yoga, Saṁkhyā* and other Indian systems. These and many other accomplished spiritual masters of the Indian tradition have played an important role in popularizing Indian psychology in the world (Paranjpe, 2005).

Third, is the secular nature of Indian psychology. It is gradually acknowledged that Indian psychology of consciousness has more to offer in terms of self-growth than as religious traditions. Interest in the study of altered state phenomena since the 1960s and the founding of transpersonal psychology as a sub-discipline, encouraged psychologists involved in them to examine the indigenous perspectives available in many religious traditions of the East. It was clearly recognized that modern psychology has nothing to offer regarding the spiritual/transcendental dimension of human nature whether to understand others or for personal growth (Tart, 1975). Unfortunately, most academic psychologists in India have not appreciated this fact, and consider Indian psychology as part of the revivalistic movement.

Fourth, with India emerging as a major economic power in the world, there is a renewed interest in Indian values, philosophies and practices, as well as in the strength and resilience of Indian society. The very Indian culture and philosophy which was debunked for India's poverty and backwardness by many Western Indologists (Max Muller, for example) is now seen behind India's success stories. Indian research is now taken more seriously by Western psychologists, and as a consequence (ironically), by Indian psychologists themselves.

The newly emerging psychology is rooted in traditional Indian thought and practices. As stated in the Pondicherry Manifesto (2002), 'Rich in content, sophisticated in its methods and valuable in its applied aspects, Indian psychology is pregnant with possibilities for the birth of new models in psychology that would have relevance not only for India but also to psychology in general'. The plurality of the Indian tradition and an ethos of accommodating diverse thought systems provide a rich gold mine for creatively building a new psychology. However, despite all diversity and distinctiveness there are some features common across all systems and schools relevant to Indian psychology. Some of these common features which give Indian Psychology a distinct identity are briefly discussed here.

Indian psychology can be deemed as *universal*. It cannot be subsumed under indigenous or cultural psychology if that implies delimiting the scope of psychological inquiry. Indian psychology deals with the perennial issues of human existence which are not bound by any geographical region or time period. Centuries back the sages and thinkers were raising the same questions and dealing with the same problems that are pertinent today, and in this sense Indian psychology is both ancient and contemporary at the same time. Indeed, the use of the term 'Indian psychology' is more of a convenience; maybe a more appropriate term is

'psychology of Indian origin'. While the roots of Indian psychology are decidedly Indian, it was never proposed as the psychology of Indian people. For instance, Buddhist psychology, which is an integral part of Indian psychology, was developed in Sri Lanka, Tibet and Japan, among other countries. Most of these theories are propounded as trans-historical, dealing with the essential human nature and ways to harness human potential.

Another important feature of Indian psychology is that it primarily deals with the *inner state* of a person, taking consciousness as the primary subject matter of study. Consciousness as a state of being is not an object but is conceived as undifferentiated subjectivity without any content. It can be studied only indirectly through its various manifestations. Buddhism refers to a stream of consciousness as the basis of the subjective feeling of continuity and identity which affects our all perceptions, thoughts, actions and emotions. Human consciousness is considered hierarchical, the highest state being of pure consciousness, bliss and truth. Distortions in consciousness are due to active interference of mind and body which limits our awareness, obscures our knowledge and feelings and cause suffering. The goal of life is to attain this state of pure consciousness where the knowledge is direct, immediate and intuitive, and not mediated by sensory inputs. Yoga and meditation are the tools to attain this transcendental state of pure consciousness.

It, however, should not be misconstrued that Indian psychology is not concerned about human conditions of poverty, injustice and pain. Indian psychology does not dismiss the empirical research in these areas but provides a broader perspective within which their findings should make sense. The theories and practices of Ayurveda are fine examples of how the mundane can be blended with the transcendental.

Indian psychology is *spiritual* in its orientation. Spiritual does not mean otherworldly, nor does it mean being religious or dogmatic. Spirituality hereby implies taking into consideration the whole range of human progression, without making a distinction between natural and supernatural. It connotes faith in the existence of higher powers and the possibility of relating to them to seek the higher-order truth of life. Spirituality has opened up the possibilities of developing broader theories of human existence to understand paranormal powers, creativity and intuitive thinking, which many people exhibit. It can be stated that spiritual and sacred go together, though in Indian thought no dichotomy is maintained between science and spirituality. Transcendence and a state of pure consciousness are held as empirical facts in Indian psychology grounded in the experiences of many and attainable for anyone who follows systematic procedures and practices. Though spirituality is at the core of most of the Indian theories it is not bound by any particular faith or 'ism' and serves to provide a secular account of human nature.

Indian psychology is based on *veridical* methods. It should be clear that as a human science of consciousness its methods ought to be different from the methods of physical sciences. However it does not permit it to be a less stringent science. Methods of observation and experimentation are evolved to study the inner functioning of a person. In these methods of self-observation no distinction is made

between experience and observation, where true knowledge is not considered as abstract and impersonal but as realization of one's being. There are methods of direct observation (for example, intuition) in contrast to those methods which rely on sensory and mental mediation. These methods rely on the blending of first-person- and second-person perspectives. Taken together, these two perspectives provide personal, subjective and non-relational verification and in-group inter-subjective validity. These methods work well within the guru (second person)–pupil (first person) tradition. Methods of yoga and meditation have been used for centuries to test, experiment and empirically validate higher mental states.

Indian psychology is *applied*. It is not just concerned about testing the existing theories and developing generalizable propositions, but more importantly, about the practices that can be used for the transformation of human conditions towards perfection. That is, transformation of the person to higher levels of achievement and well-being. The goal of Indian psychology is to help the person transcend from a conditional state (mechanical and habitual thinking) to an unconditional state of freedom and liberation. This transformation, in more mundane terms, implies becoming more objective, discretionary, equi-poised and knowing about the sources of distortion. Indian psychology extensively deals with ways to deal with human suffering and lead one on the path of personal growth. The techniques of yoga and meditation have contributed in a significant way to controlling the mind and feelings.

This newly emerging science of Indian origin calls for a paradigm shift in psychological research. A dominant view is that the Western and the Indian paradigms are irreconcilable and cannot have a meeting ground. Indian concepts and theories are grounded in different notions of human nature, epistemology, values and worldview, than the Western ones. The point is that we need both the paradigms to cover the whole range of human possibilities. Whereas the methodology of Western psychology focuses on the study of the 'other' person, Indian psychology (like other Eastern psychologies) focuses on the study of one's 'own-self'. We need both the first-person, and the third-person approach to research to bring about desired changes in human societies. The experiential basis of knowledge generation is common to theories and practices of many other Eastern philosophies, including Zen, Tao and Buddhism. The proponents of this position posit that building a more harmonious and conflict-free world order where people are able to actualize their inner potential can be a valid goal of research endeavours.

In more recent times, efforts to build Indian psychology as a vibrant discipline have intensified. Several conferences (Puducherry, 2001, 2002, 2004; Kollam, 2001; Delhi, 2002, 2003, 2007; Vishakhapatnam, 2002, 2003, 2006; Bengaluru, 2007) in recent times have given impetus to this movement of Indian psychology. A number of publications on Indian psychology, such as Kuppuswami's *Elements of Ancient Indian Psychology* (1985), Sen's *Integral Psychology* (1986), Misra and Mohanty's *Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology* (2002) have the potential of serving as textbooks. More recently, Joshi and Cornelissen's edited volume, *Consciousness, Indian Psychology and Yoga* (2004); Rao and Marwaha's *Towards a Spiritual Psychology*

(2006); Rao, Paranjpe and Dalal's *Handbook of Indian Psychology* (2008), and the present volume, provide rich resource material for teaching and research in this area. It needs to be made clear that the purpose of testing ancient Indian theories and knowledge is not to prove their superiority. It is a movement toward contemporarizing Indian theories and testing their relevance for enhancing human competencies and well-being. It is against this backdrop that Indian psychology is gearing itself to usher in a new era of many exciting possibilities.

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3

Psychological ideas in the *Vedas* and their relevance to contemporary psychology

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This chapter presents some of the key ideas and ideals contained in the four *Veda mantra* collections (*saṃhitā*), which are known as *Ṛg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. The *Yajur Veda* contains verses with metrical structures as well as short rhythmic prose passages called *Yajur mantras*. The remaining three have only verses (or *mantras*) with metrical structures. The metres in these verses have names such as *gāyatrī* and *anuṣṭup*, characterized by the number of syllables. The four books have substantial overlaps and together they comprise about 26,000 *mantras*, including repetitions. In the early days, all these *mantras* comprised a single collection as noted in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. The *Ṛg Veda* itself has about 10,500 metrical verses, divided into ten books, known as *maṇḍalas*. Each *maṇḍala* is made up of hymns or *sūktas*, each *sūkta* having about ten *mantras* or verses.

All-sided perfection

Many of the *mantras* of the *Veda* deal with the concept of an all-sided perfection of human life and modes of its realization. Those who have only cursorily glanced at the summary translations of the *mantras* of the *Ṛg Veda* by Griffith (1898) may demur at this statement. The wisdom in the *Ṛg Veda* will be apparent only after one understands the extensive symbolism in the verses. The topic of symbolism will be discussed in a later section.

The ideal of an all-sided perfection has been mentioned in several so-called 'New Age' and self-help books. Achieving perfection in a particular activity that is more or less under one's control is straightforward. If someone is serious about learning music, she may approach the best music teacher in the neighbourhood for learning. However, achieving harmony and beauty in all of one's own activities, and especially in those involving others, is a different matter. Perhaps the only way to do this is 'to completely spiritualize one's everyday life' (The Mother, 1978, p. 517), that is, to recognize the existence of a Supreme Spirit which pervades and energizes every aspect of existence and invoke That in every activity.

In the Indian tradition, the meaning of the word 'spiritual' is quite different from religion as commonly understood. Spirituality is free from any dogma or creed. Spiritual experience is an experience of the spirit or spiritual consciousness, which pervades the entire cosmos including all human activities. For instance, from the point of view of our ordinary consciousness, each being is different from every other being, human or non-human. But from the point of view of spiritual consciousness, each one of us is but a point in the ocean of consciousness. Thoughts, desires and emotions appear as waves in the ocean of the spirit; each wave waxes and wanes through each point of the cosmos, each point corresponding to a being. The movement of a particular wave of desire through a particular point gives the impression to the experiencer that that particular wave of desire originated in him. Further, the power of a person depends on the cosmic forces over which he has conscious or unconscious control. Consequently, there is no hard barrier between individual human beings and the cosmic powers called *devās,* or even the Supreme One. Only when we understand the unity of the universe, we can answer the question: 'How to introduce beauty and harmony in every aspect of our life, that is, harmony and beauty in thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward action and movement, harmony and beauty in our surroundings?'

Another important aspect of life is that everyone is engaged in some form of work. The work may be cooking, reading, listening to or making music, doing athletics, or whatever else that occupies us. However, do we understand why we work? Some people claim that they work for enjoyment. Others complain that the work they have undertaken, does not give them any joy. They seek their enjoyment by some other means utilizing the monetary resources obtained through their work. But what is the source of enjoyment?

It appears that the *Ṛg Veda saṃhitā* has answers to all the above questions—the nature of work, the forces behind activity, the relationship between work and enjoyment, and between work and progress—by relating to life as a unique journey.

Life as a unique journey

According to the Vedic sages, everyone should regard his or her life as a journey from one peak of perfection to another peak. They have indicated that help is always available for those who embark on such exciting journeys. We shall quote here one mantra from the *Ṛg Veda* (1.10.2, that is *mantra* 2 in *sūkta* 10 of *maṇḍala* 1 of the *Ṛg Veda*.) Because of its metre, each mantra is naturally divisible into three or four parts whose meanings are relatively self-contained. This particular mantra has four parts whose translation is given below. The corresponding Sanskrit text is given as an endnote.

When the worshipper climbs from peak to peak (1),
He (she) realizes the progress that is yet to be achieved (2).

> Then (the cosmic-power) Indra awakens in the seeker the purpose of the journey (3),
> And manifests with his troop to aid (the devotee in his journey) (4). (*RV*, 1.10.2)[1]

This verse or *mantra* is straightforward in its meaning and the symbolism is transparent. The phrase, 'climbing from peak to peak' indicates the life-journey of an individual, attaining one level of perfection after another.

The second line indicates the deep psychological insight that only a person who starts on a journey can understand how much is still to be done.

The third phrase makes an important statement that the person undertaking the journey is not alone or helpless. The cosmic force (or the god) Indra himself awakens in him the purpose of his journey and indicates within him or her, the next peak to be pursued. The god Indra literally comes in a subtle manner to give the help.

This verse is not unique in the *Ṛg Veda*. There are many others which deal with the life-journey and the ascent. Some translators hold that the *Ṛg Veda* is ritualistic and is devoid of any reference to higher mental operations. They should notice here the use of the word 'awakens' (*cetati*). The *Ṛg Veda* has at least thirty-six different words dealing with mental operations (Purani, 1963, p. 43). It is a sign of incompetence to regard all these words as synonyms. Sri Aurobindo (1914/1998, p. 295) makes the difference between them explicit. For instance, the two words *vicetas* and *pracetas* mean, respectively, 'one wide in consciousness' and 'one who has the perceptive knowledge'.

Further, one may wonder whether the climbing refers only to meditative activities or to the activities of everyday life, involving the life-energy (*prāṇa*) and the mind. It should be borne in mind that the *Veda* does not indulge in a rigid separation of the realm of activities into 'worldly' and 'spiritual'. Its aim is that all activities, including those of daily life, must be made spiritual. In support we quote this verse or *mantra* (*RV*, 5.7.5).

> When in his service (*veṣaṇe*) (1),
> Men cast down their sweat (as an offering) on the paths (2),
> They ascend to a self-born (self-joyous, *svajenyam*) ground (3),
> As if to wide levels (4).

In other words, the ascent to the peaks is possible by physical and mental activities.

Who are the gods?

Before proceeding further we have to focus on the nature of the cosmic forces called gods (*devās*) with names such as Agni and Indra, and their relation to the work of human beings.

The *Veda* declares the existence of the Supreme Person (*puruṣa*), (*RV*, 10.90) who is transcendent but who also, at the same time, permeates all the aspects of manifestation. The Supreme spirit is described in the *Atharva Veda* as follows:

You are the woman, you are the man;
You are the beautiful maiden; you are the boy;
You are the one tottering on the staff.
You with hundred faces look everywhere.
Atharva Veda (10.8.27), quoted in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.6)

There is nothing else in this universe except this One. But the *Veda* does not deny the existence of the Many. It gives equal importance to both the One and the Many. The core of this One is simply called *tat*. The gods (or *devās*) are not personifications of qualities or powers; they are the emanations or the conscious forces which may be called the limbs of the Supreme. They have names such *as* Agni and Indra. They are supra-physical beings without physical bodies, but endowed with consciousness, knowledge and power. They can carry out their actions directly from their consciousness. By following certain practices, a human being can come into conscious contact with one or more of these cosmic forces. All these forces are harmonious and their aim is to help human beings in their journey towards an all-sided perfection.

When a human being prays for the help of a cosmic power, that power responds and puts an emanation within the human being. This action is described metaphorically as the birth of the particular god as a child in the human being. This power can grow, indicating that the power of the particular god grows within and helps the human being in his journey.

Each God has a unique psychological power and personality, which helps the human being to develop that power. The two major deities of the *Ṛg Veda* are Agni and Indra. About 2,000 *mantras* are devoted to Agni and 2,500 to Indra.

Agni

The very first hymn in the *Ṛg Veda* describes the power of Agni. He is not merely the physical fire or the deity of the fire. Agni is the power of will endowed with wisdom. He initiates all actions. Agni's pre-eminence in the *Veda* arises from the fact that he lays the foundation for the development of the spiritual life which obviously requires a long and sustained effort. Agni is born first in humans and then helps them in the manifestation of the other gods. Agni's function begins with the inner voice (*Aitareya Upaniṣad*, 2.4). It is this aspect of Agni that the Vedic sages were initially impressed with, and they used prayers to invoke him so that he may awaken in them.

Indra and work

Indra is the Lord of the Divine mind and all its actions. The role of Indra is to help human beings develop the abilities needed for mental formation and associated action. Indra is primarily the deity who gives appropriate knowledge to human beings so that they can perform all their actions at the highest possible level of perfection. Actions are not limited to those on the physical plane, that is, those we

do with our hands, legs, mouth, etc. They include the actions done at the inner levels too—the inner vital, inner physical.

The *Veda* has interesting insights into the nature of work and how it is done. It states that every work begins with some entities—physical, mental, etc. Work is the transformation of one set of entities with particular structures and functions to another set of entities with different structures and functions, which are presumably more useful to the person doing the work. For instance, consider the work of cooking. The entities are the raw materials such as rice, water, vegetables, spices, utensils, and a source of energy of heat (*agni*). The human cook mixes the ingredients and heats them following a recipe resulting in the cooked food. Usually the human cook takes complete credit for the final result of the cooked food. A little reflection will reveal the inappropriateness of the claim. The ingredients like rice, water and vegetables have inherent properties that combine with each other under the appropriate conditions of heat, and result in the properties of taste and nourishment contained in the cooked food. The source of the energy and its instrument are not the human cook's creations. The utensils needed for the cooking have gone through a complex process for their functioning. The contribution of the human cook is to mix, stir and heat in the appropriate manner. The Vedic sages perceived that the main contributors in the edible food are the cosmic forces indicated by the rice-ness of rice, watery-ness of water, heat-power of fire and so on. The rice itself is the end-product of a complex set of operations whose major contributors are again the cosmic forces. In the growing process of a rice-seed yielding another rice-seed, the major contributors are air, water, and soil with its nourishing environment.

In other words, the major contributors in any work, the so-called willed-work carried out by human beings, are the cosmic forces known by the names of Agni, Indra, and so on; while the human contribution is really miniscule, though essential.

Recall that Indra is the lord of the Divine mind and actions. Recall also that any work involves considerable planning and the mobilization of various resources (or energies); the final part done by our hands or legs is only the last stage of the work. If we invoke the power of Indra and the other deities in the work, we become more conscious and so the quality of the product of the work improves.

The idea that work is done primarily by cosmic forces is the main reason for the injunction of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, 'Do not claim the benefits of the work done through your participation'. The human contribution is only minuscule. Even though most of the time we obtain all the benefits of the work—the food cooked by us does not walk away to others—still, not claiming the result helps us psychologically, for example when the credit is given to someone else.

We will elaborate now on the connection between Indra and work in the *Veda*. The *Ṛg Veda* (1.4.1) declares that Indra is the one who fashions perfect forms (*rūpa*). Even though this task appears to be very simple from the outer view, it involves a variety of cosmic forces to which we normally do not pay attention. Indra is the power which gives perfect form (*RV*, 1.4.1; 6.47.18). He converts our

obscure mentality into a higher intelligence. There is a prayer that says, 'may that Indra-power increase in our subtle body'. But it is to be noted that that power does not come to a lazy person. The example given is that of milking a cow. Unless a cow is milked by a specific procedure, milk is not obtained. In the *Veda*, Indra is compared to a cow, its teats have to be squeezed to release the Indra-power.

Our work is made up of the contributions made by a variety of forces. It is Mitra, the Lord of Love, who coordinates all these powers in us by his Power of Love. Both the goddess Sarasvatī and the god Mitra symbolize the accuracy of the intuitive mind, the conscious hand and the discerning eye of perfect work. The action of Mitra is possible because of the energy of the all-powerful king Varuṇa. Varuṇa never tolerates narrowness in our thinking or actions. Hence, these two deities work together and their names Mitra and Varuṇa almost always appear together.

Work and enjoyment

Speaking of the fruit of action, the *Veda* tells us that every action done consciously as an offering to the god Indra automatically results in the release of delight or joy, called *soma*. The work not only gives its intended result but also *soma*, or joy. The *Ṛg Veda* regards Indra as a cow, who can be milked and it is only our effort, which results in the milk of *soma*. If we offer the *soma* back to the gods, then the Indra-power increases in us to render our work more and more perfect. Consequently more *soma* or joy is released. This is the true relation between work and enjoyment.

Soma is the deity of joy in work and it is to be noted that this joy can be released by work. Receiving joy from work is analogous in the rituals to pressing or crushing the *soma* creeper, releasing the juice and offering it to the gods.

This *soma* obtained from the work is offered to all the gods or cosmic forces who are the real performers of our work. Among them Indra, the fashioner of thoughts, is regarded as accepting profusely or drinking copiously the *soma*. In the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* delight is the foundation of existence. The *Ṛg Veda* (9.97.41) declares that it is *soma* who causes the Sun to shine. Interestingly enough, *soma* in Sanskrit means moon. Moon and delight go hand in hand in Sanskrit poetry. Thus the name *soma* also indicates the function of the deity.

How do we invoke Agni?

Where does Agni reside in our being? How does one begin the journey? Agni is the beginning and the end. Agni is the Divine Will. He is the will in the mind and he gives the necessary aspiration for the upward journey. He is also the will in the *prāṇa*, the dynamic life-energy. He devours, enjoys and purifies the nervous being. The proverbial psychological foes such as greed, delusion and jealousy are transformed into the corresponding divine powers of sharing, clarity and taking joy in others' achievements, respectively. He transforms our reactions like anger in an encounter, into helping aids.

'Agni, the cosmic power who leads us on the journey, creates the light of intuition in us', (*ketum kriṇoti* (*RV*, 5.7.4), *ketum prathamam* (*RV*, 5.11.2)). 'Agni tears down the desert of our dwelling' (*RV*, 5.7.7), (that is, he breaks down all the wrong ideas about the world as an unhappy place or a place without aim) 'and builds a happy home for man' (*astatātim* (*RV*, 5.7.6)). He shows us the path to the plenitude (*vājāya panthām* (*RV*, 5.10.1)), or the path of right (*ṛtasya panthām*). He makes us climb to greatness, (*asuryam aruhat* (*RV*, 5.10.2)). Agni helps in our journey to the desirable goal (*vāryam yāti* (*RV*, 5.6.3)), leads us to the perfect world (*RV*, 5.6.8). The aspirant is described as the achiever of work (*dasma*) in many verses. The force of Agni incessantly drives the aspirants in their impulse (*RV*, 5.6.6). Agni awakens the glory in us, *sukīrtir bodhati tmanā* (*RV*, 5.10.4). Agni helps us by putting on the veil of humanity (*RV*, 5.21.2).

Progress is possible only because of the absence of duality in the human seeker, *na dvayena* (*RV*, 5.12.2) as he identifies himself with the cosmic powers. Any task undertaken by a human being is really an act of collaboration between him and the gods; it is known as a sacrifice or *yajña* which marches forward, *yajña ānuṣak adya* (*RV*, 5.26.8). The main associates of Indra are the Maruts. They act on our animal consciousness made up of the impulses of nervous mentality and transform them into brilliant Rays of the Sun. The Aśvins are the Lords of Bliss and healing. Their name 'Nāsatya' is derived from the root '*nas*', to move. They offer their guidance and help in the journey. And finally there is the collective of all the Cosmic Powers, gods and goddesses, *Viśve devāḥ* who help us in many ways.

Symbolism in the *Ṛg Veda*

If we read an English translation of the *Ṛg Veda* such as the one by Griffith, we see that, by and large, it consists either of pedestrian sentences such as, 'O Indra, drink the soma and kill vṛtra' or enigmatic sentences such as, 'The sages smashed the hill by their sound' (*RV*, 1.71.2); 'They smashed the hill using the cows' (*RV*, 1.7.3). In this translation many epithets associated with Agni, the fire, make no sense at all. There are only a small number of verses which appear to be full of wisdom. Often, there is no consistency between the various phrases within a single verse, let alone the entire hymn. It is claimed that the translation itself is faithful to the text but that the tradition of assigning wisdom to the *Ṛg Veda* and its poets is futile. This has been even the view of many Indian academics for more than a century.

The *Ṛg Veda* is poetry of a high order. It is sheer poverty of understanding to read poetry ignoring its symbolism. The *Veda* itself says that there is a secret in the *Ṛg Veda*.[2,3,4] That secret is hidden behind the symbolism. A symbol attempts to describe an experience beyond the realm of the senses. Symbols can be either auditory or visual. For people who have the gift, hearing a word can create an impression in the inner being, which conveys the full power of the symbol.

There are four classes of symbols in the *Ṛg Veda*. The first comprises of the *devās,* like Agni and Indra, and the *devīs* like Sarasvatī, Saramā and Mahī. They

represent distinct types of divine powers with their associated functions. In the second category are Vṛtra, Vala and Śuṣṇa, the powers of falsehood. The third category of symbols consists of common nouns like *go* (cow); *aśva* (horse); *adri* (hill); *āpaḥ* (waters); *nadīḥ* (rivers); and *vṛka* (wolf). The fourth and the last is the category of the names associated with sages and poets, like Kaṇva and Kutsa.

Each member of these four categories represents a distinct psychological power which can be a help or a hindrance. The unravelling of the symbolism behind each word was attempted by Sri Aurobindo and Sri Kapali Sastry using their experience and intuition. But we do not have to merely believe what they say. We can set up concrete objective tests to determine whether the symbolic meanings suggested by them are correct or not. For instance, take the word *go* which ordinarily means cattle. *Go* and its synonyms like *usrā* occur in more than one thousand verses. Of course, many of these verses may involve other members of the four categories like *adri* (hill). As symbol, *go* stands for knowledge; each individual type of *go* standing for a specific type of knowledge. *Adri* is the symbol for the force of ignorance and the state of inconscience, that is, an almost complete absence of consciousness. Now we can substitute the symbolic meanings for the physical meanings and see whether the various verses make sense. For the verses involving *go*, all the verses make excellent sense except those where *go* is used as a simile in which case it is an animal. If we follow this substitution systematically all the phrases which appear enigmatic or senseless become meaningful. Interpreting the meaning of the key Sanskrit words such as *go*, *aśva*, *adri*, based on all their occurrences in the *Ṛg Veda*, has been done by Kashyap (2006).

The phrase 'they smashed the *adri* with the *go*' does not mean that they smashed the hill with their cattle, but that the forces of ignorance were overcome by the forces of knowledge. The phrase 'they smashed the hill with their sound' means that the forces of ignorance were destroyed by the power of the *mantra*, the potent word.

We give in Tables 3.1A and 3.1B the symbolic meanings of some of the members of the four categories. An extensive discussion on symbolism can be found in M. P. Pandit (1967).

The recovery of the symbolic meanings of individual words is only the first step. The recovery of the deeper meaning of the verses needs much more work. Once this is done, the consistency of the meaning of all the phrases in a verse, and the consistency of all the verses in a hymn is assured. The wisdom of *Ṛg Veda* comes upfront.

Even in classical Sanskrit, the maxims of wisdom (*subhāṣita*) are expressed symbolically. We mention one such popular maxim which occurs both in the *Ṛg Veda* (7.104.22) and the *Atharva Veda saṃhitā* (8.4.22). It deals with the six well-known psychological foes, namely, 'delusion, anger, jealousy, lust, arrogance and greed', symbolized by 'owl, wolf, dog, *cakravāka* bird, eagle and vulture', respectively. *Ṛg Veda* (7.104.22) calls upon these six to be killed, but translators of the *Atharva Veda* such as Whitney think these animals/birds represent sorcerers!

Santillana and Von Dechend (1992) discuss the importance of symbolism in preserving wisdom revealed to an early generation for a later generation, which may be far removed from the earlier one, while the intermediate generations for thousand or more years may not have appreciated this wisdom.

Agni	Fire; It is the cosmic power of heat and light and the will-power united with wisdom. Human will-power is a feeble projection of this power. It can be strengthened by the Ṛg Veda chants to Agni.
Indra	Indra is the Lord of the Divine Mind and Action. In the Indian tradition, mind is not a source of knowledge, it manipulates the knowledge to aid action. Indra battles the evil forces on behalf of the human.
Vāyu	Wind; Vāyu is the Lord of all the Life-energies, prāṇa, which represent the passions, feelings, emotions and abilities.
Aśvins	The Lords of Bliss and the Divine Physicians who render the human body free of disease so that it can accept the divine prāṇa, the life-energy.
Mitra	The Lord of Love and Harmony.
Varuṇa	The Master of Infinities who cannot tolerate restrictive thinking or actions. Only he can cut the three bonds which restrict the three aspects of every human being—physical, vital and mental.
Sarasvatī	The goddess of inspiration.
Ilā	The goddess of revelation.
Saramā	The goddess of intuition.
Sūrya	The Supreme Deity of Light and Force.

Table 3.1A: Symbolism of some proper nouns or names.

go	Cow; each type of cow stands for a particular type of Light or Knowledge.
aśva	Horse; stands for the vital energy or life-energy which the *devās* can bestow.
adri	Hill; the force or beings of inconscience and ignorance.
āpaḥ	Water; the divine energies flowing from the heights purifying all mankind.
nadī	River; the flowing current of energies.

Table 3.1B: Symbolism of some common nouns.

Conclusion

The *Ṛg Veda* is the earliest book which deals with the topics of work, enjoyment and progress from a 'cosmo-psychological' angle. What we have presented here is based on the insights of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Kapali Sastry. The recognition of psychological powers behind deities like Agni and Varuṇa is credited to Sri Aurobindo. The idea of invoking the spirit all the time, as part of a spiritual attitude towards life is mentioned in the *Upaniṣad*, and by medieval saints such as Sri Madhvacharya[5], and others. Sri Aurobindo's great contribution is to show us that by invoking the great *mantras* of the *Vedas* we can still develop the powers of intuition, inspiration, will within us.

We conclude this overview with a quote from the last part of the chapter, 'The Doctrine of the Mystics' in Sri Aurobindo's *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* (1971, pp. 34–35).

> Our life is a horse that neighing and galloping bears us onward and upward; its forces are swift-hooved steeds, the liberated powers of the mind are wide-winging birds; this mental being or this soul is the upsoaring Swan or the Falcon that breaks out from a hundred iron walls and wrests from the jealous guardians of felicity the wine of the Soma. Every shining godward Thought that arises from the secret abysses of the heart is a priest and a creator and chants a divine hymn of luminous realisation and puissant fulfilment. We seek for the shining gold of the Truth; we lust after a heavenly treasure.… So understood the Rig Veda … becomes the high-aspiring Song of Humanity; its chants are episodes of the lyrical epic of the soul in its immortal ascension.

Endnotes

1 The original Sanskrit text is:

yat sānoḥ sānum āruhat (1),

bhūri aspaṣṭa kartvam (2),

tad indro arthaṃ cetati (awakens) (3),

*yūth*ena vṛṣṇir ejati (4). (*RV*, 1.10.2)

2 I know not the woof, I know not the warp nor what is this web; That they weave moving to and fro in the field of this motion and labour; These are the secrets that must be told. (*RV*, 6.9.2)

3 The truths occult exist not for the mind of the ignorant. (*RV*, 7.61.5)

4 An intuition in the heart sees the Truth. (*RV*, 1.24.12)

5 His work is extensively quoted in the books by Kapali Sastry, (2001), Kashyap, (2006), (pp. 155–158).

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4

On the *Vedic* symbolism in the light of Sri Aurobindo

Vladimir Iatsenko

*Āditya*s and other gods

The faculties of Consciousness in the *Veda* are seen as projected from the Divine Mother, Aditi, Infinite Consciousness-Force. The supreme emanations of that Consciousness-Force are called *Ādityas*, the Sons of Aditi. There are seven of them—Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Dakṣa, Amśa and Sūrya.

There are different classes of gods mentioned in the *Veda*: *Ādityas, Vasus, Viśve-devās*, *Māruta-gaṇa, Raudra-gaṇa,* etc. Although they differ from each other they also share many features and powers in the process of manifesting the Divine, which makes it difficult for the mind not used to distinguish the subtle differences in the commonly shared features. Ordinary mind would only see the crowded common imagery assigned to all of them. The ability to distinguish the particularities in the commonly shared features Sri Aurobindo attributes to the higher mind. He writes (1998, pp. 497–498):

> Yet as all these things form one in the realised godhead, as each element … contains the others in itself and none of them can exist separately from the rest, therefore each of the Four (Ādityas) also possesses by force of his own essential quality every general attribute of his brothers. For this reason if we do not read the *Veda* as carefully as it was written, we shall miss its distinctions and see only the indistinguishable common functions of these luminous Kings, — as indeed throughout the hymns the unity in difference of all the gods makes it difficult for the mind not accustomed to the subtleties of psychological truth to find in the Vedic divinities anything but a confused mass of common or interchangeable attributes. But the distinctions are there.… Each god contains in himself all the others, but remains still himself in his peculiar function.

Āditya-gaṇa is a class of deities, which distinctly differ from other types of gods such as *Viśve-devās*, for instance, who are the Universal Gods, operating already in the created Universe, whereas *Ādityas* are still representing the transcendental

and supramental levels. In their original status they also differ from the *Vasu* class, though many times they are called upon to be identified with the status of *Vasus*, especially when they are to rise in the consciousness of man.

Vasu literally means a 'luminous dweller within the substance'; Agni is often invoked by this name. And since Agni represents all the gods and godheads here and is their gate to the manifested consciousness of man, as it were, this word is also applied to all of them when used in this particular meaning of rising to the higher status from within. Thus *Ādityas, Maruts, Aśvins,* Indra, Uṣas, Rudra, Vāyu, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Kubera are invoked as *Vasus* then. In post-*Vedic* literature, the class of *Vasu*, *vasu-gaṇa*, consists of eight *Vasus*, the eighth one was born as Bhīṣma in the epic *Mahābhārata*.

There is also a clear distinction between the *Ādityas* and the *Maruts*, or the class of *Rudras*, though again they may be called upon to be identified with *Rudras* for a particular purpose, in the same way as Agni can take any of the features of other gods on himself. *Rudras* is a class of gods, especially when they are mentioned in plural, indicating the sons of Rudra (sometimes identified with or distinguished from the *Maruts*, who are 11 or 33 in number). In the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas* 11 *Rudras* are mentioned together with their female energies, *Rudrāṇīs*. The number of *Ādityas* also changes and grows up to 12, which seem to represent symbolically the 12 months of the Sun, *Āditya*.

The eighth son of Aditi

Sūrya or Savitṛ is the Creator, representing the Supramental Manifestation in all its glory of all the godheads, embodying all his brothers. He, by projecting himself into the darkness of the Inconscient, becomes Vivasvat of Mārtāṇḍa, Mortal Embryo, or Mortal Universe. It is this dark Sun, who is hidden by the Titans in the Subconscious cave of Darkness, which has to be recovered by the Sacrifice.

So Vivasvat is a Creator of the Universe, who thus carries within himself all the potentialities of his seven brothers from whom they are to rise to their high throne, from where they could see both the Supreme realms of Existence and the Lower Nature.[1] It is only then they may arrive at a supreme perception of the Lord. We can find a similar approach to the concept of Puruṣottama of the *Bhagavad Gītā,* or of Īś of the *Īśopaniṣad*.

The four transcendental godheads

The four transcendental godheads, or the Guardians of Light, are:

1. Varuṇa represents the Vastness of Infinite Being, *sat*.
2. Mitra represents the luminosity and harmony of the Divine Consciousness, *cit*.
3. Aryaman is the power of the Divine *tapas*.
4. Bhaga is the Bliss of the Divine Fulfillment, *ānanda*.

Sri Aurobindo calls the first four *Ādityas* the Guardians of Light, for they are guarding the Transcendental Light from one side and from another introducing it into the lower hemisphere. He writes in *The Secret of the Veda* (1998, p. 475), 'Aditi is the infinite Light of which the divine world is a formation and the gods, children of the infinite Light, born of her in the Ritam, manifested in that active truth of her movement guard it against Chaos and Ignorance'. Sri Aurobindo (1998, p. 497) defines the characteristics of the four first *Ādityas* in this way:

> The Divine is existence all-embracing, infinite and pure; Varuna brings to us the infinite oceanic space of the divine soul and its ethereal, elemental purity.
>
> The Divine is boundless consciousness, perfect in knowledge, pure and therefore luminously right in its discernment of things, perfectly harmonious and happy in its concordance of their law and nature; Mitra brings us this light and harmony, this right distinction and relation and friendly concord, the happy laws of the liberated soul concordant with itself and the Truth in all its rich thought, shining actions and thousandfold enjoyment.
>
> The Divine is in its own being pure and perfect power and in us the eternal upward tendency in things to their source and truth; Aryaman brings to us this mighty strength and perfectly-guided happy inner upsurging.
>
> The Divine is the pure, the faultless, the all-embracing, the untroubled ecstasy that enjoys its own infinite being and enjoys equally all that it creates within itself; Bhaga gives us sovereignly that ecstasy of the liberated soul, its free and unfallen possession of itself and the world.
>
> This quaternary is practically the later essential trinity of Sachchidananda, — Existence, Consciousness, Bliss with self-awareness and self-force, Chit and Tapas, for double terms of Consciousness; but it is here translated into its cosmic terms and equivalents.

The triple status of the Supermind

Sri Aurobindo described the triple status of the Supermind in various ways. First we will use his description in philosophical terms. It is important for us to identify the faculties of the next three *Ādityas* and their functions, which will be directly connected with the triple status of the Supermind.

1. Unity.
2. Many in One and One in Many.
3. Many.

In the chapter, 'The Triple Status of the Supermind', Sri Aurobindo (1972, pp. 145-146) writes about these three levels: 'The first founds the inalienable unity of things, the second modifies that unity so as to support the manifestation of the Many in One and One in Many; the third further modifies it so as to support the evolution of a diversified individuality which, by the action of Ignorance, becomes in us at a lower level the illusion of the separate ego.'

This vision will be then projected into all the structure of the lower

manifestation on all its levels. We may always find these three elements in the life of every creature: (a) the unifying oneness dominating over the individual elements, (b) the harmonizing diversity and its relation with oneness, and (c) the diversifying individual elements, deviating from the oneness as far as possible. These three will become the major grades in the hierarchy of the mental-vital-physical structure of consciousness, maintaining their approaches to the reality as a whole and to each other in particular.

Sri Aurobindo (1971, p. 26) also depicts the three layers of the Supermind in psychological terms, in relation to three activities of the intuitive mind—for Intuition is a flash of the Supramental light reaching out to the lower levels of consciousness. It is interesting to compare the two—the philosophical and the psychological descriptions. Here is the psychological one:

1. Interpretative Supermind ... corresponding to *Intuition*. I call it interpretative, because what is a possibility on the mental plane becomes a potentiality on the supramental plane and the *Interpretative puts all the potentialities* before you. It shows the root cause of events that may become true on the physical plane. When *Intuition* is changed into its supramental value, it becomes Interpretative Supermind.

2. Representative Supermind ... represents the actual movements of potentialities and shows what is in operation. When *Inspiration* is changed into its supramental value, then it becomes this Representative Supermind. Even this is not the highest. There you know certain potentialities in thought and action working and you can in many cases say what would happen or how a certain thing happened if it does.

3. Imperative Supermind ... which corresponds to *Revelation*. That is always true. Nothing can stand against it. It is knowledge fulfilling itself by its own inherent power.

The three godheads of the Supermind

The three godheads of the Supermind are:

1. Dakṣa represents the power of Thought, the All-discerning and All-distributing Power of Supramental Consciousness.
2. Aṃśa represents the diversity in Oneness supported by that Unifying Power of Dakṣa.
3. Sūrya or Savitṛ represents all the seven *Ādityas* and projects them into a lower Creation. His rays represent the diversity in the domains of *Svar*.

Dakṣa is the Father of all the *Ādityas* born for manifesting the Divine in the material Universe. Even Aditi is born to him as his daughter, the cosmic universal Cow, supporting with her milk all the creation. It is in Dakṣa that the triple conception by the Lord within his Consciousness is taking place,[2] which creates the triple status of the Supermind. Sri Aurobindo speaks of Dakṣa in this way (1998, pp. 473–474):

> Aditi is originally the pure consciousness of infinite existence one and self-luminous; she is the Light that is Mother of all things. As the infinite she gives birth to Daksha, the discriminating and distributing Thought of the divine Mind, and is herself born to Daksha as the cosmic infinite, the mystic Cow whose udders feed all the worlds.
>
> It is this divine daughter of Daksha who is the mother of the gods. In the cosmos Aditi is the undivided infinite unity of things, free from the duality, advaya, and has Diti the separative dualising consciousness for the obverse side of her cosmic creation, — her sister and a rival wife in the later myth.

Aṃśa literally means a 'portion', which implies two meanings simultaneously—oneness and separateness. It is in this *aṃśa* that the *jīvātman* is being shaped, projecting itself as the Psychic being into the lower hemisphere of the Sūrya Savitṛ, the Creator.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of the second status of the Supermind in this way (1972, p. 146):

> In the second poise of the Supermind the Divine Consciousness stands back in the idea from the movement which it contains[3], realising it by a sort of apprehending consciousness, following it, occupying and inhabiting its works, seeming to distribute itself in its forms.[4] In each name and form it would realise itself as the stable Conscious-Self, the same in all; but also it would realise itself as a concentration of Conscious-Self following and supporting the individual play of movement and upholding its differentiation from other play of movement, — the same everywhere in soul-essence, but varying in soul-form. This concentration supporting the soul-form would be the individual Divine or Jivatman as distinguished from the universal Divine or one allconstituting self.

The seven sons of Aditi

The seven sons of Aditi, the Divine Mother, are:

1. Varuṇa, *sat*;
2. Mitra, *cit*;
3. Aryaman, *tapas*;
4. Bhaga, *ānanda*;
5. Dakṣa, Supramental Knowledge-Force;
6. Aṃśa, Supramental Many in Oneness and Oneness in Many;
7. Sūrya Savitṛ, Supramental Manifestation.

So we can see that the whole range of the powers and consciousness is already prepared in the Supermind as a Creator before the manifestation of Cosmos can take place physically. Sūrya is the Creator of this Universe and at the same time he is the Supreme Lord, who gathered all his power, consciousness and bliss to create himself anew, to become many, *bahu syām iti*.[5]

Aditi thus reflects through her sons the higher status of the Divine in the lower hemisphere. Then she is called in the *Veda* Diti.

So there are all the equivalents of the Seven *Ādityas* within the lower Creation, there is presence of All-embracing Infinity of Varuṇa, there is a creative and harmonizing *Māyā* of Mitra, there is a powerful presence of Aryaman, and the delight of Bhaga on all the levels of Creation. It is because of the Sacrifice of the Divine Mother, Aditi, that the higher states of Consciousness are projected into and present in the lower creation. It is these who manifest the world.

This duality is created by the Supramental Consciousness-Force which thus maintains the double process of the One—its diversity and its oneness. The Consciousness of the Supreme is thus including both, and exceeding them both. To rise to his Supreme perception one must maintain both states simultaneously, as the *Īśopaniṣad* says: *vidyāṃ cāvidyāṃ ca yas tad vedobhayaṃ saha avidyayā mṛtyuṃ tīrtvā vidyayāmṛtam aśnute* (The one who knows both simultaneously, Knowledge and Ignorance, indeed by Ignorance passes through Death (as the field of constant change in Time and Space) and by Knowledge enjoys Immortality (as the all-knowing state of Being)).

It is a description of the Supreme Consciousness partaking in both, and infinitely manifesting itself in time and beyond time, being essentially one.

The Lord experiences the state of his Immortality within the transitory situation, within time and space continuum, being infinitely free from them. It is only when man can perceive both that he may rise to the highest consciousness of the Lord and see the two poises of Diti and Aditi. And that is what these godheads are doing through man's consciousness, rising to their highest realization.

Sūrya Savitṛ: The Lord of Creation

The Rays of the Sun thus build up the luminous planes, called in the *Vedas, Svar*. It has three luminous realms, called *trī rocanā,* which thus project the higher three realms of the Cosmic Mind, called *tisro dyāvaḥ*, sustaining the three spaces of the Vital realms, called *trī rajāṃsi,* supported by the three foundations of the Physical, called *tisro bhūmīḥ*.[6]

Sri Aurobindo (1972, p. 142) translated *trī rocanā* as 'three luminous worlds divine': 'three powers of Light uphold three luminous worlds divine', *trī aryamā manuṣo devatātā trī rocanā divyā dhārayanta*. These three powers of Light as the triple status of the Supermind uphold the three luminous worlds of the *Svar*, *trī rocanā*, supporting then the three heavens *trīn uta dyūn*, and the three spaces of the mid-worlds, *trīṇi rajāṃsi*.

So the three luminous realms are projected into the three heavens of our mentality and the three spaces of our vitality; and all of them are supported by Mitra and Varuṇa. It is as if they penetrate it through from the beyond, influencing them with their presence, consciousness, and power.

The *Ṛg Veda* (2. 27.8) mentions also the three earths, *bhūmīs*:

> *tisro bhūmīr dhārayan trīn uta dyūn trīṇi vratā vidathe antar eṣām*
> *ṛtenādityā mahi vo mahitvaṃ tad aryaman varuṇa mitra cāru*
> (They [*Ādityas*] support the three earths, and the three heavens. Three are

the laws within the sacrificial gathering (inside the *antarikṣa*). By the Truth the sons of Infinity have their greatness here great, and that is Beautiful, O Aryaman, Varuṇa and Mitra.)

The triple worlds

There are three earths, three levels in the vital and three levels in the mind: *tisro bhūmīḥ, trīṇi rajāṃsi* and *tisro dyāvaḥ*, projected, as it were, from three worlds of *Svar*, *trī rocanā*, as the Rays of the Sun of the Supramental Consciousness-Force.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">World</th><th>Svar
(a link to the World)</th><th>Supermind
(triple status)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Mental Mind
Vital Mind
Physical Mind</td><td>Mind</td><td rowspan="3">trī rocanā
(three luminous realms)</td><td rowspan="3">Unity

Many in One &
One in Many

Many</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mental Vital
Vital Vital
Physical Vital</td><td>Vital</td></tr>
<tr><td>Mental Physical
Vital Physical
Physical Physical</td><td>Physical</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 4.1: The triple worlds.

The Mental Mind is what Sri Aurobindo calls in *Savitri* the Self of Mind, the Cosmic or Universal Mind. The Vital Mind is the Universal Life's Mind and the Physical Mind is the one which manifests the physicality of the Universe. Human mind is also build on the material ground, dependent on the physical brain, dealing with physical reality of the Cosmos.

And these are the three heavens mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda* (1.35.6) as *tisro dyāvaḥ* of Savitṛ; two are his own realms and one is in the realm of *Yama—tisro dyāvaḥ savitur dvā upastāṃ ekā yamasya bhuvane virāṣāṭ*. So it is the Mind of the physical universe, which is in the world of Yama, and the Universal Vital Mind and the Universal Mental Mind are in the realms of Savitṛ, which Sri Aurobindo calls in his system of Knowledge: Higher and Illumined Mind.

If we were to compare Sri Aurobindo's terms with the *Vedic* terminology we would see a picture as in Figure 4.2.

Supramental Overmind	*trī rocanā*, 'three luminous worlds divine'
Overmind	
Intuitive Mind	

Illumined Mind	*tisro dyāvaḥ*, three heavens
Higher Mind	
Mind	

Figure 4.2: A comparison of Sri Aurobindo's and *Vedic* terminologies.

We have already mentioned *tisro dyāvaḥ*, the three realms of the Universal Mind—Mental, Vital and Physical, which in Sri Aurobindo's terminology are identified as Illumined Mind, Higher Mind and Mind—but we did not speak about the three *rocanas* yet, the three luminous realms of *Svar*. The particularity of *Svar* is that it begins in the Supermind and extends itself into the Overmind and then to the Intuitive Mind. It is here that the major difficulty of understanding of *Svar* lies. Sri Aurobindo speaks of *Svar* differently in different contexts—sometimes he identifies it with the Supermind and sometimes he underlines the difference between the two. It is the world of the Rays of the Sun, which in its first stage, before going out, is still a part of the Sun and is Sun itself. It is only later that the Rays disperse into the groupings of flashes in the Overmental realms and finally become separate in the Intuitive Mind.

Sri Aurobindo describes this phenomenon in a letter speaking of the levels of the Overmind (1970, p. 261):

> There are different planes of the overmind. One is mental, directly creative of all the formations that manifest below in the mental world—that is the mental overmind. Above is the overmind intuition. Still above are the planes of overmind that are more and more connected with the supermind and have a partly supramental character. Highest in the overmind ranges is the supramental overmind or overmind gnosis.

Commenting on the hymn to Mitra and Varuṇa, Sri Aurobindo speaks about the three *rocanas* as 'the three luminous worlds in which the triple mental, the triple vital, the triple physical find the light of their truth and the divine law of their powers' (1998, p. 538).

There is another fundamental difficulty in the understanding of *Svar*, for, according to the *Veda*, it was created last, after Heaven and Earth and *Antarikṣa* came into existence. It is as if it requires a feedback, or a field of application. If the lower creation were not there, *Svar* would not come into being. It is because of Agni being born in the lower creation, calling for the light from above, that *Svar* finally manifests.

> *gīrṇam bhuvanaṃ tamasāpagūḍham/ āviḥ svar abhavaj jāte agnau /* (*RV*, 10.88.2)
> ([First] Being was swallowed by the Darkness and hidden within it. Then, when Agni was born, *Svar* became manifest.)

The Hymn of Creation (*RV*, 10.190) also speaks of *Svar* as being created last:

> *ṛtaṃ ca satyaṃ cābhīddhāt tapaso 'dhi ajāyata /*
> *tato rātrī ajāyata tataḥ samudro arṇavaḥ*
> (The Law and the Truth were born from the kindled Power of *Tapas*.
> From that the Night was born, from the Night—the Ocean of Inconscient Waters.)
>
> *samudrād arṇavād adhi saṃvatsaro ajāyata /*
> *ahorātrāṇi vidadhad viśvasya miṣato vaśī*
> (From the Ocean the Year was born, distributing Days and Nights, the Master of All that changes.)
>
> *sūryācandramasau dhātā yathāpūrvam akalpayat /*
> *divaṃ ca pṛthivīṃ ca antarikṣam atho svaḥ*
> (The Sun and Moon, the Establisher fashioned as before. Heaven and Earth and Space in-between, and then—*Svar*!)

The explanation to this phenomenon we can find in the understanding of that fact that there is a fundamental difference between the Illumined Mind and the higher realms of the Intuitive Mind and the Overmind. Sri Aurobindo writes about it in a letter (1970, p. 264):

> Intuition is above illumined Mind which is simply higher Mind raised to a great luminosity and more open to modified forms of intuition and inspiration.… The Intuition is the first plane in which there is a real opening to the full possibility of realisation—it is through it that one goes farther—first to overmind and then to supermind.

He also defines the difference between the Illumined Mind and Intuitive Mind in *Savitri,* in the Canto, 'The Self of Mind', where Intuitive Mind can be reached only through the higher action of Intuition itself, coming down from above to the Illumined Mind. It is through the overflooding directness of the Overmind via Intuition that the Illumined Mind can come into contact with the Supramental consciousness, says Sri Aurobindo in one of his letters (1970, p. 365):

> [T]he thousand-petalled lotus—sahasradala—above commands the higher thinking mind, houses the still higher illumined mind and at the highest opens to the intuition through which or else by an overflooding directness the overmind can have with the rest communication or an immediate contact.

Mental Vital	*trī rajāṃsi*, three vital realms
Vital	
Physical Vital	

Mental Physical	*tisro bhūmīḥ*, three earths
Vital Physical	
Physical	

Figure 4.3: The two lower triple realms.

The *trī rajāṃsi*, the three realms of the Vital are the levels of (a) the Higher Universal Life, (b) the Universal Life, as such, with an entrance (*antarikṣa*) to the Infinite Darkness, and (c) the Universal Life as it is known to us projected into the creation of material Universe.

So, the Mental Vital corresponds to the plane which Sri Aurobindo describes in the *Second Book of the Traveller of the Worlds*, in the Ninth Canto, 'The Paradise of the Life-Gods'. It is the Life Force which is on the other shore of material Creation, beyond the darkness, as it were. To reach that shore Aswapati must cross the regions of the Eternal Night, which are described in the previous two Cantos, seventh and eighth, 'The Descent into Night' and 'The World of Falsehood, The Mother of Evil and the Sons of Darkness'.

It is only after crossing those regions of Infinite Darkness and Evil that he moves to the realms of the Mental Vital and then to the Mind levels in the following Cantos, first to 'The Kingdoms and Godheads of the Little Mind', which corresponds to the Cosmic Physical Mind, depicted in the *Veda* as Heaven of *Yama*, ruling over men, *yamasya bhuvane virāṣāṭ* (*RV*, 1.35.6), which is our human mind in its highest potential; and then to the 'Kingdoms and Godheads of the Greater Mind', to the Cosmic Higher Mind's regions.

Thus the realms of Life are the place where all the troubles begin, where the dark forces enter into our system of mental-physical existence. It is here in the Vital, *antarikṣa*, that the bridge is to be made by the Sacrifice to the higher domains of consciousness, seeking their direct and effective influence. It is here that the whole battle is going on between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, in the field of our Life.

The *tisro bhūmīḥ* are the three realms of the Universal Physical, determined by:

1. the Mind, which makes it self conscious in manifesting and maintaining its form,
2. the Life, which makes it dynamic in its own movement;
3. the proper Physical, as a faculty housing all other forces and levels of

> consciousness, taking their part in the material manifestation of the Divine.

Without the physical being fully prepared there cannot be any direct Supramental influence in the material Nature, for it is, as it is clear now, dragging down the vital and the mind inherent in it, not allowing them to realize freely their full potential. And there is a reason for it, for all of them are here only to manifest the Divine in matter, and not for any other reason. Sri Aurobindo says in his letter to a *sadhak* (1970, pp. 1228–1229):

> There can be no conquest of the other planes by the supermind but only an influence, so long as the physical is not ready.... And how is it possible to perfect the mind and vital unless the physical is prepared—for there is such a thing as the mental and vital physical and mind and vital cannot be said to be perfectly prepared until these are ready.

Body as a Supramental creation

The triple conception by the Creator, depicted in the *Veda*, within his own Consciousness creates the Supermind. The very physical consciousness is a result of this conception and a part of its realization.

The physical and mental consciousness are seen in the *Veda* as two luminous firmaments, *rodasī*, supporting the growing Soul in this Creation.

The body itself is seen as the outcome of a Supramental Creation, which at the first glance is not easy to understand, but which explains why in the post-*Vedic* spiritual traditions, together with disappearance of the concept *Svar* and the Supermind, the body also lost its proper meaning and got reduced to be seen as an imprisonment and even as a problem in finding our true self rather than a solution in manifesting the Divine in matter.

Sri Aurobindo writes in a letter, 'The supramental is necessary for the transformation of terrestrial life and being, not for reaching the Self. One must realise Self first, only afterwards can one realise the supermind' (1970, p. 105).

In the *Vedas*, the Heaven and Earth, our mental and physical consciousness, was considered to be pure and conscious of the Divine. The body was seen as a fortress and refuge for the soul of man against the forces of Darkness. It was referred to as 'well-made', a dwelling place for the Spirit. The treatment of the physical body underwent a fundamental change in the later *Māyāvāda*-oriented spiritual traditions; it was seen as an obstacle and hindrance on the path to the spiritual realization, rather than the supporter of, or the field of, realization. It fell off into the domain of a lower consciousness and was blamed for keeping the soul here, bound to suffering against its will to be free.

The seven Suns of the Supermind

Sri Aurobindo reconsidered the usual yogic practices, oriented towards Liberation alone—which came in the post-*Vedic* period when the transformation of earthly

life and physical body was considered impossible—and turned towards the *Vedic* view of transformative practice: invoking the higher powers by the means of aspiration in the heart and surrendering to them for the transformation. He introduces the ancient *Vedic* methods of a Descent of a Higher Consciousness and Power into our mental, vital and even subtle physical and physical bodies for transformation.

It is as if he is looking from above at the physical body, seeing it from the Supramental point of view. He writes about the seven centres in the body as the manifestation of the Seven Suns of the Supermind in this way (2001, p. 1342):

1. The Sun of Supramental Truth, Knowledge-Power, originating the supramental creation.
   Descent into the *sahasradala*.
2. The Sun of Supramental Light and Will-Power, transmitting the Knowledge-Power as dynamic vision and command to create, found and organize the supramental creation.
   Descent into *ājñā cakra*, the centre between the eyes.
3. The Sun of Supramental Word, embodying the Knowledge-Power, empowered to express and arrange the supramental creation.
   Descent into the throat centre.
4. The Sun of Supramental Love, Beauty, and Bliss, releasing the Soul of the Knowledge-Power to vivify and harmonise the supramental creation.
   Descent into the heart-lotus.
5. The Sun of Supramental Force dynamised as a power and source of life to support the supramental creation.
   Descent into navel centre.
6. The Sun of Life-Radiances (Power-Rays) distributing the dynamis and pouring it into concrete formations.
   Descent into the penultimate centre.
7. The Sun of Supramental Substance-Energy and Form-Energy empowered to embody the supramental life and stabilize the creation.
   Descent into the *mūlādhāra*.

The concept of Sacrifice

Heaven and Earth, the mental and physical consciousness, are housing souls here, as the eternal *aṃśas* of the Divine, to perform the Sacrifice; that is, to invoke and bring down the higher forces of Consciousness. Heaven and Earth, meanwhile are supporting and nourishing them, protecting them from *abhva*, the Inconscient, which they have descended to convert and to save.

Agni, the Divine Will, the spiritual Father of all the evolving souls of men, is thus a growing Lord in the Darkness, taking all of it onto Himself and changing it into the Divine nature.

Heaven and Earth, our Father and Mother, Mental and Physical Consciousness, were seen as projected from the Supermind into the darkness of the Inconscient as

the Golden Embryo, the *hiraṇya garbha*. Then they got separated into two halves. The upper one became Heaven and the lower Earth. The Space in-between became *antarikṣa*, introducing into our system through its opening the powers of the beyond, of the superconscient and subconscient realms, from the Abyss of *abhva*, to meet and to fight in this space. It is a window to the Infinite Light and the Infinite Darkness. It is a place of a Sacrifice.

And in this space the soul of man is growing, supported by our physical and mental consciousness. Sri Aurobindo (1998, pp. 383–384), speaking about the *Vedic* symbolism of the Sacrifice, says:

> Thus the soul is a battlefield full of helpers and hurters, friends and enemies. All this lives, teems, is personal, is conscious, is active. We create for ourselves by the sacrifice and by the word shining seers, heroes to fight for us, children of our works. …
>
> The soul of man is a world full of beings, a kingdom in which armies clash to help or hinder a supreme conquest, a house where the gods are our guests and which the demons strive to possess; the fullness of its energies and wideness of its being make a seat of sacrifice spread, arranged and purified for a celestial session.
>
> Such are some of the principal images of the Veda and a very brief and insufficient outline of the teaching of the Forefathers. So understood the Rig Veda ceases to be an obscure, confused and barbarous hymnal; it becomes the high-aspiring Song of Humanity; its chants are episodes of the lyrical epic of the soul in its immortal ascension.
>
> This at least; what more there may be in the Veda of ancient science, lost knowledge, old psycho-physical tradition remains yet to be discovered.

Sacrifice as a way to transformation

Agni is a summoner, *hotṛ*, and a messenger, *dūta*, to the Gods from above and from within the depth of his own Consciousness-Force, introducing them and their transcendental presence here in the earthly consciousness of man.

In the depth of his being he has access to all the Godheads, for he himself represents all of them here in the realms of the fallen Self.

It is by the Sacrifice performed by men in himself that these transcendental Godheads, *Ādityas*, are rising to their highest Throne, from which they can see both the Infinite and the Finite Creation.

Agni invokes and brings them here from the luminous realms of *Svar, rocanād,* into the earthly mind, life and body of men. Thus we see in the *Ṛg Veda* (1.14.9):

> *ākīṃ sūryasya rocanād viśvān devān uṣarbudhaḥ /*
> *vipro hoteha vakṣati*
> (May the Invoker, the Ecstatic Priest, (Agni) bring here to us the Gods, who awake with the Dawn, from the luminous world of the Sun, *rocanād*.)

Indra and Agni: The two poles of the Sacrifice

As Agni is building it from within, from the depth of Inconscient, Indra is coming from above, from the beyond of our mentality, striking It with his Lightning,

illumining all the enemies hiding there and destroying them. Sri Aurobindo writes in the *Secret of the Veda*:

> Indra, the Puissant next, who is the power of pure Existence self-manifested as the Divine Mind. As Agni is one pole of Force instinct with knowledge that sends its current upward from earth to heaven, so Indra is the other pole of Light instinct with force which descends from heaven to earth. He comes down into our world as the Hero with the shining horses and slays darkness and division with his lightnings, pours down the life-giving heavenly waters, finds in the trace of the hound, Intuition, the lost or hidden illuminations, makes the Sun of Truth mount high in the heaven of our mentality. (1998, p. 30)

The illumination which Indra brings is the light of the Sun.

> Surya... is the master of that supreme Truth,—truth of being, truth of knowledge, truth of process and act and movement and functioning. He is therefore the creator or rather the manifester of all things—for creation is outbringing, expression by the Truth and Will—and the father, fosterer, enlightener of our souls. The illuminations we seek are the herds of this Sun who comes to us in the track of the divine Dawn and releases and reveals in us night-hidden world after world up to the highest Beatitude. (1998, p. 380)

The aim of the Sacrifice

The Union of the three levels of the physical consciousness with the three spaces of the vital and three heavens of the mental consciousness is the aim of the *Vedic* Sacrifice.

For thus it effectuates the ascent to *Svar*'s three luminous realms, *trī rocanā*, introducing the Supramental consciousness into the lower hemisphere.

The union of Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya, was considered to be the aim of the *Vedic* Sacrifice, where Agni was seen as the essence of Earth, *pṛthivī;* Vāyu as the essence of the Space in-between, *antarikṣa;* and Sūrya the essence of Heaven, *dyaus*. So if these three fires are united into one Fire, then the aim of the Sacrifice is realized. For it recreates the Oneness of the triple status of the Supermind here in the lower hemisphere by completing it on all the levels of Consciousness.

Planes of consciousness in Savitri

There is a wonderful description in *Savitri* of all the levels starting from the Higher Mind and ending with the Supermind (1997, pp. 659–662):

> A few have dared the last supreme ascent
> And break through borders of blinding light above,
> And feel a breath around of mightier air,
>
> Receive a vaster being's messages
> And bathe in its immense intuitive Ray.
> On summit Mind are radiant altitudes
> Exposed to the lustre of Infinity,

Outskirts and dependencies of the house of Truth,
Upraised estates of Mind and measureless
There man can visit but there he cannot live.

[Higher Mind]
A cosmic Thought spreads out its vastitudes;
Its smallest parts are here philosophies
Challenging with their detailed immensity,
Each figuring an omniscient scheme of things.

[Illumined Mind]
But higher still can climb the ascending light;
There are vasts of vision and eternal suns,
Oceans of an immortal luminousness,
Flame-hills assaulting heaven with their peaks,
There dwelling all becomes a blaze of sight;
A burning head of vision leads the mind,
Thought trails behind it its long comet tail;
The heart glows, an illuminate and seer,
And sense is kindled into identity.

[Intuitive Mind]
A highest flight climbs to a deepest view:
In a wide opening of its native sky
Intuition's lightnings range in a bright pack
Hunting all hidden truths out of their lairs,
Its fiery edge of seeing absolute
Cleaves into locked unknown retreats of self,
Rummages the sky-recesses of the brain,
Lights up the occult chambers of the heart;
Its spear-point ictus of discovery
Pressed on the cover of name, the screen of form,
Strips bare the secret soul of all that is.
Thought there has revelation's sun-bright eyes;
The Word, a mighty and inspiring Voice,
Enters Truth's inmost cabin of privacy
And tears away the veil from God and life.

[Overmind]
Then stretches the boundless finite's last expanse,
The cosmic empire of the Overmind,
Time's buffer state bordering Eternity,
Too vast for the experience of man's soul:
All here gathers beneath one golden sky:
The Powers that build the cosmos station take
In its house of infinite possibility;
Each god from there builds his own nature's world;
Ideas are phalanxed like a group of suns,

Each marshalling his company of rays.
Thought crowds in masses seized by one regard;
All Time is one body, Space a single look:
There is the Godhead's universal gaze
And there the boundaries of immortal Mind:
The line that parts and joins the hemispheres
Closes in on the labour of the Gods
Fencing eternity from the toil of Time.

[Supermind]
In her glorious kingdom of eternal light
All-ruler, ruled by none, the Truth supreme,
Omnipotent, omniscient and alone,
In a golden country keeps her measureless house;
In its corridor she hears the tread that comes
Out of the Unmanifest never to return
Till the Unknown is known and seen by men.
Above the stretch and blaze of cosmic Sight,
Above the silence of the wordless Thought,
Formless creator of immortal forms,
Nameless, investitured with the name divine,
Transcending Time's hours, transcending Timelessness,
The Mighty Mother sits in lucent calm
And holds the eternal Child upon her knees
Attending the day when he shall speak to Fate.[7]
There is the image of our future's hope;
There is the sun for which all darkness waits,
There is the imperishable harmony;
The world's contradictions climb to her and are one:
There is the Truth of which the world's truths are shreds,
The Light of which the world's ignorance is the shade
Till Truth draws back the shade that it has cast,
The Love our hearts call down to heal all strife,
The Bliss for which the world's derelict sorrows yearn:
Thence comes the glory sometimes seen on earth,
The visits of Godhead to the human soul,
The Beauty and the dream on Nature's face.
There the perfection born from eternity
Calls to it the perfection born in Time,
The truth of God surprising human life,
The image of God overtaking finite shapes.
There in a world of everlasting Light,
In the realms of the immortal Supermind
Truth who hides here her head in mystery,
Her riddle deemed by reason impossible
In the stark structure of material form,
Unenigmaed lives, unmasked her face and there
Is Nature and the common law of things.

There in a body made of spirit stuff,
The hearth-stone of the everliving Fire,
Action translates the movements of the soul,
Thought steps infallible and absolute
And life is a continual worship's rite,
A sacrifice of rapture to the One.
A cosmic vision, a spiritual sense
Feels all the Infinite lodged in finite form
And seen through a quivering ecstasy of light
Discovers the bright face of the Bodiless,
In the truth of a moment, in the moment's soul
Can sip the honey-wine of Eternity.
A Spirit who is no one and innumerable,
The one mystic infinite Person of his world
Multiplies his myriad personality,
On all his bodies seals his divinity's stamp
And sits in each immortal and unique.[8]

Endnotes

1 *RV*, 5.62.8: *ā rohatho varuṇa mitra gartam ataś cakṣāthe aditiṃ ditiṃ ca /*
(O Varuṇa, O Mitra, you two are ascending to your throne from where you see Aditi and Diti, Infinite and Finite Consciousness).

2 *RV*, 5.69.2: *trayas tasthur vṛṣabhāsas tisṝṇāṃ dhiṣaṇānāṃ retodhā vi dyumantaḥ/*

(There stand wide three luminous Bulls and cast their seed into the three Thoughts).

3 Reference to *saṃjñāna*, *vijnāna*, *ājñāna*, *prajñāna*

4 Reference to *Aṃśa Āditya*

5 *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.10.

6 *RV*, 5.69.1: *trī rocanā varuṇa trīn uta dyūn trīṇi mitra dhārayatho rajāṃsi*

(Three worlds of the Light you two uphold, O *Varuṇa,* three heavens, three mid-worlds, O *Mitra*!'

The three luminous worlds *trī rocanā*, (from root *ruc*, to shine) are the three levels of *Svar*).

7 *RV*, 5.69.3: *prātar devīm aditiṃ johavīmi madhyaṃdina uditā sūryasya /*

rāye mitrāvaruṇā sarvatātā iḷe tokāya tanayāya śaṃ yoḥ

(In the Dawn I call constantly to the Divine Mother *Aditi,* and in the midday and in the rising of the Sun. For the shining wealth for All I seek her with adoration, O *Mitra* and V*aruṇa*, for peace and for creation and fro the birth of her Son.)

It is a culmination and the meaning of this creation, the birth of the Son of Aditi, the Supreme in the physical body of man.

8 *RV*, 7.52.1: *ādityāso aditayaḥ syāma pūr devatrā vasavo martiyatrā |*

(May we become *Ādityas* in their infinite qualities, which they all share in the

Supreme Mother *Aditi*, and at the same time remain unique, stay like a Fortress among the Gods and among the Mortals, O Luminous Dwellers in the substance!)

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5

Beyond mind: The future of psychology as a science

Kundan Singh

Introduction

Impressed by the apparent potential of physics to explain, predict and control natural phenomena, Western psychology, rooted in a Newtonian-reductionist framework and guided by the philosophy of naïve Realism, embraced a methodology identical to the one employed by the natural sciences, to generate universal, rational, objective and value-free laws of human behaviour. This gave Western psychology the much-coveted status of science. However, as far as the current status of psychology as a discipline goes, there are numerous psychological schools, all claiming scientific 'objectivity'. Trying to find the reason why there are so many different 'objective' psychological truths, this chapter critically examines the methodological and epistemological assumptions behind mainstream psychological research. It narrates the problems associated with the objectivity of psychological knowledge largely by drawing from the critique of science by Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend and Karl Popper which emerged from their analysis of the history of science. Kuhn's view leads one to identify the crucial role that paradigm plays in scientific research. An extension of his arguments suggests that psychological knowledge is relative with respect to person, time, culture and paradigm. A meta-analysis of the epistemological conclusion gives birth to a peculiar situation where opposite categories like relative and absolute, objectivity and subjectivity, the truth and falsity of facts co-exist.

The second half of the chapter examines the future of psychology as a science against this impasse generated by the recognition of relativism and the aforementioned paradox, and what should be the true foundation for Indian psychology. Vedānta and Mahayana Buddhism have long ago recognized that the intellectual, logical and discursive pursuit of human knowledge ends in such kinds of *cul-de-sac* and impasse, and that such a recognition should necessitate a shift towards changing the *modus operandi* of our pursuit of knowledge. Mind is not the final summit in the evolution of mankind. There can be faculties other than mind which can be used to uncover nature's truths, and it is not in the spirit of science to fall prey to

scientism. Furthermore, this chapter, which draws substantially from the writings of Sri Aurobindo, discusses the possibility of a psychology which will be made possible by making a mystical exploration into the nature of Reality where forces invisible to the ordinary human eye, which nevertheless determine human behaviour, will be observed and known. Such psychology has been our Indian legacy. It is time that we recognize it and introduce its epistemological, metaphysical, and ontological underpinnings in academia.

Scientific concerns of modern psychology

Psychology's identification with science is apparent from even a cursory glance at its textbooks, teaching programmes and emphasis on quantitative methods and objective stance toward psychological processes. Interestingly, throughout its disciplinary history, psychology has been defined in myriad ways. The early psychologists defined it as the study of consciousness, mind and mental activity. With the advent of Behaviourism at the turn of the century, due to its central concern with studying only the phenomena that could be objectively measured, psychology came to be described as the study of behaviour. This definition has featured in most psychology textbooks of the 1930s through the 1960s. The cycle has come full circle with the development of cognitive and humanistic/transpersonal psychology, as most current definitions of psychology make references to both behaviour and mental processes (Henley, Johnson & Jones, 1989; Ciccarelli & Mayer, 2006). Despite little variations, most definitions of psychology emphatically maintain and make it explicit that it is a science.

In the late nineteenth century, physics rooted in the Newtonian framework was solving puzzle after puzzle, and this led philosophers like J. S. Mill to believe that by subjecting human beings to a similar kind of experimentation, one could isolate cause and effect relationships in quantitative terms, which would then allow them to generate universal laws of human behaviour. However, more than a hundred years have elapsed since the first experimental lab was established by Wundt in 1879, and the outcome of this approach has been thousands of theories, mostly at variance with one another—all trying to explain behaviour and behavioural problems scientifically.

The crucial question, however, is how we can have so many theories of human nature—all claiming scientific objectivity—and yet be unable to explain anything conclusively. For none of the theorists claimed that their laws were not scientific—on the contrary they all claimed and documented that these laws were derived from an objective and an unbiased observation. Therefore, it becomes increasingly pertinent to review the central tenets of the methodology that have guided psychological research generating these theories, and consequently the pitfalls of this approach before we talk about a new paradigm of psychology—a paradigm which not only explains the cause of numerous 'objective' truths but also proposes an epistemology that does not contain the problems of the current and existent one.

Science was formalized by Francis Bacon in the seventeenth century. He gave two fundamental laws of science: induction and deduction, which form the basic tenets of positivism, a school of thought which has dictated the conduct of psychology from the past to the present. Positivism later developed into logical positivism, and together they are called the 'received view of science'. Also, the birth of science was buttressed by a philosophy that has been called naïve Realism, which contends that there is an objective reality independent of the observer and that it can be understood by wresting out its secrets by a rational, unbiased and value-free observer. Consequently, the philosophy of realism created dualism such as subject and object, fact and value and sharp divisions like objective reality and subjective feelings.

The problem with induction, and challenges to objectivity

Induction starts with observation, stemming from an unprejudiced mind. The observations lead to singular statements—referring to a particular state of affairs at a particular time—that form the body of facts from which the laws and theories that constitute scientific knowledge can be derived. For the singular statements to culminate in universal laws, an important condition that needs to be met is that the number of observation statements forming the basis of generalization must be large (Chalmers, 1999). Following this, a finite set of singular statements would lead to a universal law. This was designated as inductive reasoning. Once the inductive laws are established, they can be tested at a different place and time. This is the process of deduction. The essential condition for the methodology of science is that the observation has to be value free, detached and objective.

As stated before, an important premise of induction is that the number of observations must be large. However, despite a large number of cases showing consistency, it is not guaranteed that the next event would not be contrary to it. Hence repeated observation cannot ultimately justify induction. For example, no matter how many white swans we may have encountered, it does not imply that all swans are white; the next that we encounter may be black (Popper, 1992). The inductive principle is considered as the mainstay of science by positivists. They maintain that if it is removed from the canon of science, science will loose its power to determine the nature of Truth. But how does one logically prove that the principle of induction is true in the first place and not an assumption. In other words, how does one ascertain that the inductive principle helps uncover the truth? It is argued that since it seems to operate well in a large number of cases, the premise is correct. This implies that one uses induction to justify induction and thus the argument assumes circularity. This is called the *problem of induction* (Popper, 1992).

The most serious drawback with induction is, however, with respect to its claim of objectivity in observation. It is a common experience that no two individuals register the same thing even if the respective images on their retinas are the same. One does not require much knowledge of psychology to know that the

observer's perception is determined by her expectations, belief, knowledge, inner state and psychological make-up.

The contention of an inductivist, that the true basis of scientific knowledge should proceed from an unbiased and unprejudiced mind, is further rendered absurd by the practice of the scientist to consider only those data that are relevant to her research. Since the idea of relevant and irrelevant is always present during the course of investigation, the possibility of an unbiased and unprejudiced observer takes a back seat. The investigator or scientist cannot but be an integral part of the research work and her subjectivity is bound to play an instrumental role in the outcome of the research. Thus, it can be safely said that the data do not have an independent existence; rather they are constructed within the confines and boundaries of a theory. In other words, data are theory-laden and objectivity is the last thing that scientists should claim. Expressing similar concerns, Feyerabend (1993, p. 12) writes:

> The history of science, after all, does not consist of fact and conclusions drawn from facts. It also contains ideas, interpretation of facts, problems created by conflicting interpretations, mistakes, and so on. On closer analysis, we find that science knows no "bare facts" at all but the "facts" that enter our knowledge are already viewed in a certain way and are, therefore, essentially ideational.

For any meaningful research—or for that matter any research—to take place it is imperative that the researcher has some sort of a framework, otherwise how is she going to collect, organize and interpret the data. Data are essentially neutral and meaning needs to be ascribed to them. It is the paradigm with all its presuppositions, and, as previously acknowledged, the predispositions of the researcher—her psychology, her cosmological world-view, her language, her inner states, her beliefs, her expectations, and her previous knowledge of the world—help interpret the data. The mainstream discourse on science presumes that facts and values are separate. Feyerabend (1993, p. 51), however, using countless examples from the history of science, states that this is a myth:

> The material which a scientist *actually* has at his disposal, his laws, his experimental results, his mathematical techniques, his epistemological prejudices, his attitude towards the absurd consequences of the theories which he accepts, is indeterminate in many ways, ambiguous, *and never fully separate from the historical background*. It is contaminated by principles which he does not know, and which, if known, would be extremely hard to test. Questionable views on cognition, such as the view that our senses, used in normal circumstances, give reliable information about the world, may invade the observation language itself, constituting the observation terms as well as the distinction between veridical and illusory appearance. As a result, observation languages may become tied to older layers of speculation which affect, in a roundabout fashion, even the most progressive methodology. (Italics in original)

The problem of objectivity is further compounded by the fact that 'we speak more about our observation of the world rather than of the world, and we do this through a less than fully adequate language system. The linguistic limitation, by

itself causes problems even if we could overcome other limitations' (Baker, 1991, p. 12). This happens because language not only describes events but also creates a cosmology, a worldview that influences the thought, behaviour and perception of the user. When a child begins to learn a language, the worldview of her ancestors is passed onto her. The human mind begins to take many facts of life as givens, and the entire process may be totally unconscious. Her worldview begins to create what she may observe. Also, in order to be unprejudiced, one will have to abandon language itself, which will remove all ability to think, as a consequence of which the practice of science will stop before it begins. Writes Edward Sapir:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language that has become the medium of expression of that society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group.... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Cited in Whorf, 1962, p. 134)

In the study of high-energy particles, it has been found that particles cannot be understood as isolated entities but only in the context of their preparation and measurement. This means that the Aristotelian or the Newtonian idea of fundamental basic building blocks does not hold water anymore. Further, the classical distinction between subject and object—which was a natural outcome of the philosophy of naive Realism—has become vague as the observer has been found to be an integral part of the experiment. How an experimenter has set up an experiment and the measurement that she has decided to undertake determine the result of an experiment to a large extent. The observer is an inseparable part of the observation being made, or in other words, reality is not independent of the observer. Capra (1992, p. 78) observes:

> The human observer constitutes the final link in the chain of observational process, and the properties of any atomic object can only be understood in terms of object's interaction with the observer. This means that the classical ideal of objective description of nature is no longer valid.

With the advent of the Relativity theory of Einstein, space and time, which appear to us as absolutes in our everyday experience, have been rendered relative with respect to the observer. The claim of the realists that objects like tables, chairs, bags, stones, and statues have absolute existence also does not hold true in the light of the theory of relativity, for it has been shown that the length of an object—consequently its shape too—is dependent on its motion with respect to the observer. The length of a rod shortens as its motion increases with respect to the observer. Modern physics has also exploded the myth of an absolute linearity of time. Time in the theory of relativity has a meaning only with respect to a frame

of reference, for as the velocity relative to the observer increases, time intervals increase. In other words, time for two individuals moving at different velocities presents a different meaning.

To sum up, the preceding arguments indicate that for an individual to be without a bias or a value, she has to come from nowhere. Values and biases are implicit to the human condition and dichotomies like subject-object, and fact-value are a myth.

Sociology of knowledge: Objectivity demystified

Apart from values, inner expectations, knowledge, social position and observer's bias, science embraces other dynamics as well, which can constrain an objective approach to reality. The spirit of science is to question, but science can easily lose its tenor by falling prey to scientism, a kind of dogmatism comparable to the fundamentalist aspect of any organized religion. Imbued with the spirit of questioning, Kuhn (1970) questioned the notion of science itself. His work is significant in that he has made it abundantly clear that science, like any other human activity, is a social activity which affects and is affected by the milieu in which it is embedded, and is guided by the sociological, economic, historical and political forces. According to him, science is practised by the communities of scientists and not by isolated men and women. To understand the workings of science, it is therefore imperative to understand the scientific community, its accepted and shared norms and beliefs. The complex nature of sociological factors that operate when any research is conducted can be appreciated with the help of Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: The sociological matrix of scientific research (Adapted from Danziger, 1990).

The innermost circle represents the immediate social condition in which research is conducted. The next circle represents the research community that has to accept the data as scientific knowledge. The outermost circle denotes the wider social

context that embraces the research community. The investigators, the research community and the society are interconnected in a complex web of affairs, which has many dimensions.

If we analyse the dynamics of the inner circle—the immediate research conducted for generation of psychological knowledge—we find that the objectivity of psychological knowledge and the rationale of the Newtonian framework for psychology are seriously challenged. The experiments that are conducted are done by human beings on human beings, in sharp contrast to physical sciences where experiments are conducted on inanimate objects. With the recognition of 'experimenter expectancy effects' and 'demand characteristics', it can be inferred that the experimental results are co-determined by the social relationship between the experimenter and the subjects (Danziger, 1990).

As far as the research community is concerned, Kuhn (1970) points out that scientific practice is shaped by deep assumptions of the worldview of which the scientist may be unaware. For research to take place, the community must agree upon the goals, the methodologies and the valid subject matter in the context of research. The agreement on all these issues would constitute a framework or a paradigm. The paradigm has two components—*disciplinary matrix* and *shared exemplars*. The *disciplinary matrix* consists of a certain fundamental set of assumptions that are often unstated and not subject to empirical test. These assumptions form the basis for testing specific hypotheses. For example, reductionism states that the world can be understood by breaking it into smaller units until we arrive at a set of fundamental units. This is an assumption that is not subjected to any kind of an empirical test, and thus constitutes a portion of the *disciplinary matrix* of scientists who adhere to this belief. The other component of a paradigm is *shared exemplars*—the models for investigating new problems which include the methodology for pursuing the research. Kuhn (1970, p. 109) explains:

> [Paradigm] functions by telling the scientist about the entities that nature does or does not contain and about the ways in which those entities behave. That information provides a map whose details are elucidated by mature scientific research. And since nature is too complex and varied to be explored at random, that map is as essential as observation and experiment to science's continuing development. Through the theories they embody, paradigms prove to be constitutive of research activity.... In learning a paradigm the scientist acquires theory, methods, and standards together, usually in an inextricable mixture.

The *disciplinary matrix* and *shared exemplars*, by constituting the paradigm, unconsciously trains a researcher to approach a problem in a specific way which gradually becomes her natural way. In this vein, Leahey (1991, p. 14) writes:

> Neither source of data is comprehensible without training, yet once the scientist learns to interpret them, he or she will see them in those ways and no others. Thus training can act as a set of blinders, keeping the scientist from seeing in new ways. All observation and perception—whether scientific or not—is a matter of interpretation as numerous psychological examples have shown.

Thus, the generation and interpretation of data is contingent upon the paradigm in which the research is being conducted. Essentially data are neutral; they become facts when they are interpreted against a theory comprising *a priori* categories. For example, the measurements made with the Atwood machine would have meant nothing in the absence of Newton's *Principia*. The meaning and interpretation of data change with a change in paradigm. For instance, with a change in electrical paradigm, what was a Leyden jar became a condenser. Kuhn has also shown that science is not as rational and objective as it is supposed. Indeed, scientific rationality is a matter of consensus. It involves unexamined biases and social interests like fame, fortune, love, loyalty and power of the investigator. More often than not, scientists following the same norms of disinterestedness, objectivity and rationality arrive at different conclusions. The history of science reveals that many competing theories exist before one paradigm becomes dominant even if all of them had arisen from experimentation and 'disinterested' observation.

Lyotard (1984) states that this is essentially a problem of legitimization. The question of good research and bad research is contingent upon the community of scholars deciding whether it is in harmony with the criteria of truth, of justice, of beauty—though these criteria are held to be universal to all humanity, they are specific to the larger culture or country to which the community belongs. Since research is a social activity, it is not free from politics. Feyerabend (1993, p. 163) puts this most beautifully:

> Scientists are not content with running their own playpens in accordance with what they regard as the rules of the scientific method, they want to universalize their rules, they want them to become part of society at large and they use every means at their disposal—argument, propaganda, pressure tactics, intimidation, lobbying—to achieve their aims.

The history of science also demonstrates that scientific knowledge is temporally relative. What was considered once as science has been later rejected as superstition. By the same token, what constitutes scientific knowledge today, which has been extracted from nature by subjecting it to repeated investigation, may turn out to be error tomorrow under the influence of a different paradigm.[1]

A committed believer in science would say that this phenomenon has taken place because science is cumulative, and scientists have refined their theories in an effort to come closer to a truer and more accurate interpretation and description of nature. Kuhn disagrees and contends that instead of science being cumulative, it is revolutionary. A change in the paradigm changes the worldview of the scientist. Kuhn holds that it is difficult to demonstrate the superiority of one paradigm over another purely on 'logical' argument. The primary reason is that the proponents of the rival paradigms subscribe to a different set of standards and metaphysical assumptions. The rival paradigms are so incommensurable that no appeal to 'rationality' can settle the issue.

To complete this discussion let us quickly comment on the outermost circle depicted in Figure 5.1. The pursuit of knowledge is also intimately connected with the society in which it develops. It is being increasingly realized that each society

has its own vision of reality that shapes the perception and thoughts of its inhabitants. This helps them to negotiate their life with different images, symbols, metaphors and institutions in a unique way that may be incommensurable with that of another society—all of these determine the subject matter of psychology or any discipline for that matter. Sociology of knowledge aptly discusses the social and historical forces that play a major role in the development of a subject. The anti-theistic ideas of scientific psychology are a case in point. Science, in order to establish its identity in post-medieval Europe, had to struggle against the Church which had usurped all powers to arbitrate every activity of humankind. It had restricted the freedom of inquiry and held courts of Inquisition to prosecute men like Galileo and Descartes and all those who differed from the scriptures. Moreover, it had waged holy wars in the name of religion and caused much bloodshed. Against this backdrop, science dissociated itself from anything that had to do with God or with supernatural forms of existence, resulting in a bias and dichotomous divide between religion and science which has not been plugged till date in the mainstream scientific circles (see Danziger 1990; Leahey 1991, for details).

Relativism and the paradox of self-referentiality

The line of argument discussed in the previous section very clearly explains why we have as many theories as we have psychologies. Psychologists are human beings as well, and they are very much grounded or caged in their own perspectives which determine the way they approach the problem of solving the enigmas of human behaviour. Psychologists see different facts because they ascribe different meta-structures of biases, theories, paradigms, cosmological worldviews, beliefs, culture, expectations, etc. to the raw data in order to interpret them. In other words, their individual humanness makes them see psychological issues differently. The aforementioned arguments also indicate that psychology and all forms of knowledge—there is an intimate connection between psychology and knowledge—are relative with respect to individuals, time, culture and paradigms. But incidentally, this is a statement suggesting an absolute truth. *Paradoxically the conclusion, 'Truth is relative', harbours in it an absolute truth*. Similarly, experimental psychology has devised experiments (for example, Joseph Jastrow's famous duck–rabbit experiment), the results of which show that the perception of reality is necessarily subjective. But while stating this, it also makes a statement which embodies an objective validity. So a fact discovered by psychology becomes subjective and objective at the same time leading to a paradoxical and a peculiar situation. In other words, the pursuit of knowledge or Truth—which is the basis of any scientific investigation—becomes absolute and relative simultaneously.

A meta-analysis of Kuhn's arguments culminates in a situation that is not different. One of the chief themes of his theses is that paradigms guide research in terms of observation and interpretation of data. If his premise is true—he has, of course supported it with a lot of evidence—then, by extension, it can be said that he has culled out data from the body of the history of science to support

his theory that paradigms guide research. In other words, the data was collected with the theory—paradigm guides research—already in his mind. As soon as we recognize this, Kuhn's arguments turn on themselves, thus assuming circularity. *A paradoxical situation emerges again: Kuhn's arguments are true and false at the same time*. True because there is evidence to support his claim, and false because he contradicts himself by inviting his arguments on himself. Alternatively, his arguments have been designated as self-referential by his critics, and have been termed as self-refuting.

Secondly, Kuhn has cited evidence to show that facts and data have no meaning in themselves; they acquire meaning when interpreted against a theory or framework. There is an implicit circularity and paradox here too. By force of Kuhn's arguments, it can be argued that the evidence that he has used to demonstrate the truth of his arguments is meaningful only against his contention that evidence has no meaning in the absence of a framework. Evidence lend support to his theory whereas a similar kind of contradiction as described above, and the fact of being oblivious to his own subjectivity, while attributing the crucial role of the scientist's subjectivity in guiding research, renders Kuhn's theory problematic. If the evidences of the other scientists are not sacrosanct, it can as well be said that Kuhn's are not either.

In view of relativism, self-referentiality, circularities and paradoxes, does this mean that the pursuit of knowledge and psychology approaches a dead end? For the mainstream approach of finding the truths of human behaviour or psychology based in the classical distinction of subject and object, fact and value, and relative and absolute has come to a *cul-de-sac*. Does this mean that the impasse cannot be resolved? The answer is a resounding no if we begin to analyse the Indian spiritual traditions. Let us examine how these traditions offer an alternative paradigm to psychology research that goes beyond mind.

Beyond mind: Towards a new paradigm for psychology

The simultaneous existence of right and wrong, true and false, and relative and absolute that produces a paradox poses no problem for the Mādhyamika philosophers. In this section, we will examine how these paradoxes can be resolved, paving the way for intuitive knowing or for the study of psychology with consciousness as its subject matter.

Nāgārjuna, a second century Mādhyamika philosopher, stated that concepts, events and entities do not exist in isolation but exist in relation to one another. He further contends that concepts, events and entities called *svabhāva,* actually lack any intrinsic existence, and that any attempt to reduce them to having an independent status will lead to absurdity. According to Nāgārjuna, nothing exists in-itself and of-itself, and no concept has any meaning independent of a relation. This is the principle of *pratītya samutpāda* or dependent origination, and the main philosophy under which this is discussed is called *śūnyavāda* or *śūnyatā* or the doctrine of emptiness. Black and white, good and evil, valleys and mountains,

friends and enemies are co-implicates. All contradictions and oppositions, seen from a slightly different perspective reveal that they are one and essentially whole. The opposites are not against each other but complement each other. Darkness is born out of light and day is born out of night. Nāgārjuna writes:

> How, indeed, will disappearance exist at all without origination? [How could there be] death without birth? There is no disappearance without [prior] origination.
>
> It does not obtain that origination and disappearance are the same thing. It does not obtain that origination and disappearance are different (McCagney, 1997, p. 59, insertions in original).

McCagney (1997, p. 60) citing from Nāgārjuna's work *Śūnyatāsaptatikārikā*, writes:

> Without one [*eka*] there are not many [*aneka*]. Without many [*aneka*] one [*eka*] is not possible.
>
> The father is not the son, the son is not the father. Neither exists without being correlative. (Insertions in original)

Employing the principle of *pratītya samutpāda* or dependent origination and his dialectical skills, he refutes the contention of the realists that a thing exists in-itself or of-itself. The subject does not exist independent of the object; neither does the cause exist without the effect. These dichotomous pairs—like all that we use in everyday life—have no meaning beyond their relationship with each other.

Thus, the rigid dichotomy between the subject and the object crumbles down, for the Mādhyamika critique shows that the act of knowing is a product of the interaction between the observer/knower and the observed/known. Any dichotomized way of thinking results in *avidyā*, loosely translated as ignorance, which motivates the mind to grasp thoughts as things to be grasped by the individual ego. The solution to the enigma of our existence or the knowledge of the ultimate is gained by the transcendence of all the reified and rigid thoughts through a way of 'seeing' and 'being' called *prajñā*. The search for knowledge is grounded in our language, presuppositions and all those concepts and entities that we hold on to as givens in our everyday life. We attach transcendental and eternal value to them, which Mādhyamika deconstructs by placing them in a sociolinguistic and historical context, thus paving the way for a spiritual seeker to transcend the rationalistic tendency to make sense of the truth through any epistemological or ontological suppositions. Huntington (1989, p. 121) explains this most beautifully:

> According to the Mādhyamika, a … convoluted and subtle relationship holds between any two dichotomies of conceptual thought, whether expressed in ontological, epistemological, ethical or any other terms: Cause/effect, subject/object, substrate/predicate, absolute/relative, truth/error, good/evil, and all other dualistic concepts find their meaning in the context of their elusive relationship with each other and with an interrelated network of other such concepts. The structure that they give to all experience—a structure that seems "to emerge from the things themselves"—is also dependent on an illusion similar to the Necker cube where each image finds its meaning and

> existence only in the context of its relationship to partners that must always remain out of sight.

The crucial difference is that whereas illusion in Necker cube is simple, the regular life situations are much more complex. Huntington (1989, p. 121) continues:

> The critical difference is only that the context of everyday life in which these other relationships are embedded is infinitely more complex, for it embodies an indeterminate number of historical and circumstantial factors shared by the sociolinguistic community in which this vocabulary is used and thought and perception take place.

Similarly, Advaita Vedānta posits that this world consists of dualities, and that the Ultimate Reality, which is the source of all that exists, is beyond all these dualities. True knowledge can only be gained when one transcends the dual world. Swami Satprakashananda (1977, pp. 96–97) writes:

> It is maya that brings about the relativity of subject and object, the knower and the known. The two are dissimilar, yet inseparable. One does not exist without the other. The universe is a conglomeration of pairs of opposites, such as life and death, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, knowledge and ignorance, plenty and want, beauty and ugliness, kindness and misery, love and hatred, good and evil, in which the antitheses are correlated; yet either factor appears to be an independent element and in vain we try our utmost to have one of the pair to the exclusion of the other. This is the effect of the maya. There is no elevation without depression, no construction without destruction, no addition without subtraction. In each case they the contraries form a single process. They are inseparable; yet they appear disparate. This is the effect of maya.

Having addressed how the subject–object dichotomy can be transcended, let us examine the cause of underlying relativism, though generally not acknowledged in the discipline of Western psychology. This is because, as supported by many mystical traditions, mind—with reason, logic and intellect as its instruments—cannot arrive at the truths of our existence. Intellectual activity, discursive thinking and logical analysis alone are not capable of solving the final enigmas of our existence—it cannot unravel all the mysteries. According to Sri Aurobindo—one of the greatest mystics of the last century—mind and its instruments cannot perceive the reality as a whole as its very nature is to classify, divide, compare and measure. It creates dualities such as absolute/relative and subject/object. It tries to understand things through categories, concepts and formulas. This is perhaps why in the intellectual history of mankind there have been scores of such formulas and theories but nothing definitive can be said about the fundamentals of our existence despite that most psychological theories have almost equal intellectual appeal, and have evidence to support their claim even if they contradict one another. What we have today are thousand and one schools of psychology each claiming an exclusive monopoly on the truth of human behaviour. Sri Aurobindo (1997, pp. 162–163), who has written extensively on the limitation of the mind on numerous occasions throughout his writings, puts it most succinctly:

> Mind in its essence is a consciousness which measures, limits, cuts out forms of things from the indivisible whole and contains them as if each were a separate integer. Even with what exists only as obvious parts and fractions, Mind establishes this fiction of its ordinary commerce that they are things with which it can deal separately and not merely as aspects of a whole. For, even when it knows that they are not things in themselves, it is obliged to deal with them as if they were things in themselves; otherwise it could not subject them to its own characteristic activity. It is this essential characteristic of Mind which conditions the workings of all its operative powers, whether conception, perception, sensation or the dealings of creative thought. It conceives, perceives, senses things as if rigidly cut out from a background or a mass and employs them as fixed units of the material given to it for creation or possession. All its action and enjoyment deal thus with wholes that form part of a greater whole, and these subordinate wholes again are broken up into parts which are also treated as wholes for the particular purposes they serve. Mind may divide, multiply, add, subtract, but it cannot get beyond the limits of this mathematics. If it goes beyond and tries to conceive a real whole, it loses itself in a foreign element; it falls from its own firm ground into the ocean of the intangible, into the abysms of the infinite where it can neither perceive, conceive, sense nor deal with its subject for creation and enjoyment.

Western psychology—due to the spirit of the times—has mainly been inspired by an intellectual and cognitive activity with a heavy reliance on the logical and discursive mind to find out the truths of human behaviour, for the West has considered intellect with its purified reason to be the ultimate instrument for exploring the nature of human existence. Consequently, it embraced a methodology that operated in strict dualities and dichotomies like subject/object, absolute/relative, and universal/local. But the reason of individuals varies according to their belief, upbringing, culture, attitude, language and perspective. Also the reason that has money and power to back its claim becomes the right reason. Recognizing the relativity of reason, which also explains the presence of relativism in psychology with respect to theories, Sri Aurobindo (1995, pp. 164-165) states:

> You believe according to your faith, which is quite natural, he believes according to his opinion, which is natural also, but no better so far as the likelihood of getting at the true truth of things is in question. His opinion is according to his reason…. How is reasoning to show which is right? The opposite parties can argue till they are blue in the face—they won't be anywhere nearer a decision…. But who can look at the world as it is and say that the trend of things is always (or ever) according to the right reason—whatever this thing called right reason may be? As a matter of fact there is no universal infallible reason which can decide and be the umpire between conflicting opinions; there is only my reason, your reason, X's reason, Y's reason multiplied up to the discordant innumerable. Each reasons according to his view of things, his opinion, that is his mental constitution and mental preference.

Similarly, according to Advaita Vedānta, mind is not the knower of things but an object of knowledge. Just as physical objects—such as a chair, for instance—can

be observed, mind also can be observed, which makes it an object of knowledge rather than a knower. Hence the knowledge of our existence cannot be grasped by the mind—it is something else that is the knower. That according to Vedānta is the Self, which is the self-intelligent, self-aware, self-evident, self-illuminating consciousness.

It is only by consciously identifying oneself with the consciousness beyond the mind that one finds the truths of one's existence. That Self is the self of all selves, and by knowing that one not only gains the knowledge of one's own self but also the knowledge of the selves of all others. According to Advaita Vedānta and Sri Aurobindo, all the things that we call our real self like mind and body are not the self at all—these are external aspects of personality put forth by the Nature for the play of life. The real Self is within and above all that we usually identify as our self. The identification with the real Self reveals to us the knowledge of all the mysteries that the universe has concealed from us, which includes the truth that lies behind the psychology of every human being. Sri Aurobindo (1996, pp. 374–375) comments:

> Since the Self which we come to realise by the path of knowledge is not only the reality which lies behind and supports the states and movements of our psychological being, but also that transcendent and universal Existence which has manifested itself in all the movements of the universal, the knowledge of the Self includes also the knowledge of the principles of Being, its fundamental modes and its relations with the principles of the phenomenal universe. This was what was meant by the Upanishad when it spoke of the Brahman as that which being known all is known. It has to be realised first as the pure principle of Existence, afterwards, says the Upanishad, its essential modes become clear to the soul which realises it. We may indeed, before realisation, try to analyse by the metaphysical reason and even understand intellectually what Being is and what the world is, but such metaphysical understanding is not the Knowledge. Moreover, we may have the realisation in knowledge and vision, but this is incomplete without realisation in the entire soul-experience and the unity of all our being with that which we realise. It is the science of Yoga to know and the art of Yoga to be unified with the Highest so that we may live in the Self and act from that supreme poise, becoming one not only in the conscious essence but in the conscious law of our being with the transcendent Divine whom all things and creatures, whether ignorantly or with partial knowledge and experience, seek to express through the lower law of their members.

Consequently, psychology needs to be a science of consciousness as opposed to a science of mind and behaviour. This new paradigm of psychology can be made possible by transcending our mind, and by implication its various created dualities, by attaining *prajñā* or by realization of the Self.[2] This paradigm of psychology warrants the transcendence of mind, logic, intellect and reason by using our mind to the hilt to see how logic, reason and intellect are inferior instruments in the pursuit of the truths of our existence. The mystics claim that the deeper truths of our existence unravel themselves on a silent mind, compared metaphorically to an

ocean that is absolutely calm. In other words, stillness of the mind is the necessary condition for accessing knowledge that lies beyond the domain of intellect. It is this region that holds the key to the secrets of mind and consciousness. A complete silence of the mind and a change of ordinary human consciousness hold the promise of accessing knowledge of the fields not available to the physical eye.

A change of ordinary human consciousness becomes a necessary condition for undertaking such a pursuit of psychology. It is not by looking outside of us that we can find answers to the enigmas that shroud us, but by looking within. In this research the researcher and the researched become one; the subject becomes the object and vice versa, leading to the transcendence of the strict dichotomy of subject–object that psychology has practised so far. Yoga, which actually means a union with the Divine or with the essential ground of all beings—whichever way one may want to see it according to one's preference—is the key through which a change of human consciousness—and hence a transcendence of mind—is possible. The Indian mystics have practised this art for centuries together, and have left behind a rich source of literature for all kinds of aspirants who want to take this path. Many of them have always stated that there is no one right way to take; that is the reason why there is a plethora of paths leading to the oneness that underlies this universe, based on the different constitutions and psychological make-up that humans have. However, when I talk about the distinctiveness of India in this field, I do not mean to suggest that such experiments have not been conducted anywhere else in the world—what I definitely mean is that they have been fewer in other parts of the world limiting the many possibilities of approaching the consciousness that humans have in their repertoire.

From the spiritual literature, and the written accounts of mystics it is found that there are layers and layers of consciousness, and forces that are invisible to the ordinary human eyes that are constantly impinging on human beings that determine their behaviour. These forces and levels of consciousness can only be discovered if we undertake an enquiry which involves a direct and intuitive experience with the nature of things. Sri Aurobindo (1994, pp. 333–334) states:

> It is not enough to observe and know the movements of our surface nature and the superficial nature of other living creatures just as it [is] not enough for Science to observe and know as electricity only the movements of lightning in the clouds or for the astronomer to observe and know only those movements and properties of the stars that are visible to the unaided eye. Here as there a whole world of occult phenomena have to be laid bare and brought under control before the psychologist can hope to be master of his province.
>
> Our observable consciousness, that which we call ourselves, is only the little visible part of our being. It is a small field below which are depths and farther depths and widths and ever wider widths which support and supply it but to which it has no visible access. All that is our self, our being,—what we see at the top is only our ego and its visible nature.
>
> Even the movements of this little surface nature cannot be understood nor its true law discovered until we know all that is below or behind and supplies it—and know too all that is around it and above. (Insertion in original)

Conclusion

To sum up, psychology needs to base itself on the foundation of a sure knowledge—on having a first hand knowledge of the hidden layers and layers of consciousness, which means mastering the subtle realms of human existence that are not visible to the ordinary human eye. It needs to go into the trans-mental and trans-intellectual realm through purification of mind and body, by transcending logical and intellectual thought, by stilling the mind within all internal and external chaos and flux so that the knowledge of the subtle and the invisible becomes known. Within the Indian tradition, it means seeing things with the 'third eye'. The future psychology as a science or the psychology that I envision, primarily based on the insights of Sri Aurobindo, is one in which such knowledge of 'psychology by identity' becomes a legitimate field of enquiry in academia, and is taken up by large numbers of people. For centuries together in India, the exploration of the deeper truths of our existence has taken place by the mystics—Ṛṣis, Munis and Sufis. Under the destruction brought about by colonization and the dominance of Western heuristics in academia since then, a legitimate field of enquiry into the nature of human existence was systematically decimated and discredited. In modern times the pursuit of knowledge has come a full circle, and the time has come to pursue the ancient science once again, and in its light evaluate the findings of Western psychology. Within the Indian context, the time has come for us to bestow legitimacy to the age-old tradition of ours, and inspire the younger generation of psychologists to become mystics who can determine the psychological laws and the psychology of individuals based on knowledge by identity, and we need to make a quantum jump by exploring the mystical and the invisible realm of Nature who carries in herself all the secrets that govern human behaviour.

Endnotes

1 In a post-script to the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in its second edition, Kuhn distanced himself from the relativistic claims. But experts are of the opinion that his claims are relativistic given the way he has advocated the process of change and switch in paradigms, sometimes comparing them to religious and political conversions where not much of reason and logic are involved (for details see Chalmers, 1999, pp. 122-123).

2 I do not suggest that the realizations of Self and *prajñā* result in the same spiritual state. If that were the case, the Vedāntins and Buddhists would not have had such vigorous debates as they did in the past. I am of the view that they result in different spiritual states; however, there is a commonality to both in that they for their respective realizations require the transcendence of logical and discursive faculty.

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6

Indian psychological thought in the age of globalization

John Pickering

In this chapter we will consider how Indian psychological thought may fare as globalization creates a new world order. Currently, globalization means Westernization, and hence a loss of cultural diversity. But with the rise of India and China a more even balance will emerge, within which Indian psychological thought will have the opportunity to play a more influential role than hitherto.

Information technology is a major driver of globalization and has brought about an exponential rise in communication and exchange; what Anthony Giddens calls 'The Runaway World' (Giddens, 2002). This is the most recent stage of modernity, the industrial-urban phase of human cultural evolution that is now some four centuries old. Early modernity saw the colonial expansion of Western influence while the present postcolonial stage is seeing Eastern cultures resume their former places. This geopolitical re-balancing will be the context for the reception of Indian ideas in the coming century.

The Internet, a major feature of the postcolonial world order, makes it increasingly easy for people to learn about other cultures and even to participate in them. This will lead to Indian traditions becoming better known as more people will then seek them out or come across them by accident. Devotees of Indian culture may fear that this will lead to devaluation and distortion, but they need not worry. Traditions that have survived thousands of years of internal struggles, as well as centuries of colonialism, will be resilient enough to resist the cultural homogenization of the Internet. In fact, the recombinant culture of a globalized world order, with its eclectic debates, may actually suit Indian traditions very well. As Amartya Sen makes clear, disputation, diversity and synthesis are fundamental features of Indian intellectual traditions (Sen, 2005). So, they will not merely survive globalization, they are likely to thrive.

The technological benefits of modernity created a cultural myth of progress and wellbeing. Now, however, the costs are all too apparent. The unsustainable environmental impact of consumerism is increasingly clear. Westernized lifestyles pose a threat to the integrity of the biological systems on which life depends and,

hence, to the well-being of us all. We have entered 'Anthropocene', a period of evolution in which it appears that human activity is capable of doing fundamental damage to the biosphere. Fostering human wellbeing in the Anthropocene is the major collective task facing humankind (see for example, Sachs, 2007).

Against this backdrop, we will here examine why Buddhism has been more widely received outside India than some other Indian traditions. We will then look at the postmodern condition of Westernized cultures, paying special attention to changes in the scientific worldview. It will be suggested that these changes, illustrated here by the case of quantum physics, have implications for how Indian psychological ideas and practices are received. The chapter will end by considering the role that Indian traditions more generally might play in promoting human wellbeing in the Anthropocene.

Why has Buddhism spread while other Indian traditions have not?

In what follows, we will have relatively little to say about the vast range of Indian psychological thought in general but will instead concentrate on Buddhism. There are two main reasons for this. One is that it is possibly the best known of Indian traditions outside India. The other is that the approach to mental life found in early Buddhism turns out to be richly comparable with contemporary Western thought.

In the Harrapan–Aryan origins of Indian thought we find earthy ritual, spiritual insight and intellectual speculation. In Hinduism, we find a condition of dynamic stability in which no element has predominated. Hinduism has provided the basis for a cultural system that has survived through millennia of reconfiguration. From Westernized perspectives, Hinduism can appear chaotic and inconsistent because it is hard to place within Western terms such as 'religion', 'philosophy', 'culture' or 'society', and because of the distortion resulting from the projection of Western cultural assumptions and values. Hinduism is actually no less orderly or consistent than other major cultural systems, but can appear so if its depth and richness are filtered through an inappropriate conceptual vocabulary.

The barriers to understanding Hinduism encountered during the colonial period are well known. The miscegenation of human and animal forms and the complexity of Hindu myths offended the sensibilities of Muslims and Christians alike, who, sharing a notion of a single Godhead, could find little accommodation with a multiplicity of gods. Nor could the scientific-rational character of Western colonial thought find much common ground with the spiritualized intellects of Śaṅkara or Nāgarjuna. From Locke through to the Utilitarians, British political and philosophical thought had placed primary importance on the rights and responsibilities of the individual. To understand *Ātman* and *Brahman* in the spirit of Hinduism and to see individuals as part of a greater whole was a near impossible task, even for those well disposed towards Indian thought.

The Western distaste for the caste system likewise arose because their ideals

of social equality were based on the assumed equality of individual rights and duties. While the caste system is also concerned with rights and duties, it does so using the notion of Karma; without the Western view of individual equality, it was bound to be misunderstood. In these and in many other ways, Indian thought evaded Western categories. Of course, for Indian thinkers this was not particularly important. Gandhiji did not classify Hinduism as a religion or a philosophy but was content to describe it as simply the Indian Way of Life.

This being so, it is not so surprising that some Indian traditions have not spread far or penetrated deeply into other cultures. If we consider the reception of Indian thought in the West over the past few centuries, we find that real engagement with it is generally limited to the academy. This is true even of cultures like Britain which had prolonged contact with India. To this day, even though there are many genuine followers of Hinduism in the West, popular knowledge of Hindu traditions is limited and in some cases rather superficial. It is hard for Westerners to see the unified foundations below the colourfully diverse surface of Hindu practices. Moreover, the intellectual and spiritual discipline required for informed engagement with Hinduism are often too formidable, for even the well-disposed scholar.

Buddhism and Jainism are interesting contrastive cases here. Jainism is not widely practiced outside India while Buddhism has from its earliest days been taken up in other cultures. In contemporary Western cultures, Jainism is relatively unknown while Buddhism is sometimes described as the West's fastest growing religion.

There is no single reason for this, but the extreme austerity of Jainism must play a role. While many Buddhist traditions are also austere, they mix this with a tolerance of human limitations and of the compromises needed to be made in order to live in the world of ordinary human experience. While the founding figure of Jainism, Mahāvīra, starved himself to death, the Buddha stopped short and took nourishment. This human act and the advocacy of the middle way are something that can be universally recognised. We can likewise recognise *ahiṁsā* as a general moral injunction, perhaps with similarities to the Christian notion of stewardship. However, it is more difficult to recognize when elevated into the Jain ideal of absolute harmlessness, where all living things are assumed to have the capacity to suffer. This is a difficult notion to translate into Western terms, even though similar ideas having a long history can be found in contemporary sources (for example, DeQuincey, 2002).

By contrast, Buddhism has proved more acceptable to people from different cultural backgrounds. The fact of suffering, the first of the four noble truths, is simply and painfully apparent. That having been accepted, it prepares the way for the other three to be taken up as matters to be investigated. It is also significant that the originating narrative of Buddhism is one in which a heroic individual endures and then overcomes great hardships. There is a deep resemblance to Christianity here and Buddhism may have a particular attraction for those in societies shaped by Christianity who, while unable to be Christian, are seeking a spiritual path.

They may pre-consciously feel that Buddhism is what a spiritual discipline should be like.

Buddhism may also be more acceptable in the West because of the emphasis it places on personal responsibility. The break with Brahminism has a deep correspondence with the break with Catholicism during the Protestant Reformation. In both cases individuals became more responsible for their own salvation and no longer needed to have a priestly class to perform rituals on their behalf. But just as Buddhism retained the doctrine of Karma and its remediation through skillful action, so Protestantism retained the notion of sin and of redemption through effort and virtuous conduct. Max Weber identified this ethic as one of the cultural drivers of early capitalism and modernity (Weber, 1904). In both cases, what improvements individuals can make to their lives depends entirely on how they act.

This is a particular case of the more general way in which Buddhism matches the cultural patterns in Western societies in general and in their educational practices in particular. In both traditions, taking responsibility for one's actions and one's progress as a human being is fundamental. It is the responsibility of the individual to acquire the means to live more skillfully.

One further factor that may contribute to the accessibility of Buddhism is its marginalization of metaphysics. The emphasis is on direct engagement with everyday experience and with how suffering can arise in meeting the immediate trials of life. Abstract or theoretical questions are not matters of primary concern. While the textual resources of Buddhism, the *Abhidhamma* for example, offer a profound inquiry into the nature of mental life, the heart of Buddhist teachings lies elsewhere. Engaging with the *Suttas* and the *Vinaya* does not require speculation on the nature of the mind or its relation to the cosmos. The doctrine of dependent origination likewise can be understood as a general proposition about physical and mental causality, but while it may invite further inquiry this is not essential to using Buddhism to manage more skillfully the actual mental lives we lead.

By sharp and critical contrast, most contemporary Western psychology purports to be an essentially scientific inquiry into mental life. Here, theoretical questions are primary. The belief is that the primary aim of psychology must be disinterested scientific understanding. Attempts to improve it are secondary and in any case should be aimed at the mental lives of others. Psychologists apply the results of scientific research in education, care of the mentally ill, the design of the workplace and so on. The psychologists' own mental lives are seldom at issue.

Buddhism, however, is primarily a therapeutic system of mental practice that must include the individuals engaged with it. Its primary aim is to lessen suffering, something that is assumed to be a universal value for all and any experiencing beings. This being so, it could be thought that there is a significant barrier to any contact with Western psychology, which models itself on the value-free rational practices of scientific inquiry. In fact, the next section will sketch some contemporary changes in Western culture and the scientific worldview, which suggest why this is not so.

The postmodern turn

It was pointed out above that globalization is a recent feature of Modernity. This phase of human cultural evolution has been marked by an explosive growth in scientific knowledge ranging from the peculiarities of the sub-atomic world to the immensities of the cosmos. By the late nineteenth century, the success of science made it seem that a beneficial, unified, materialistic worldview would be able to account for all phenomena, including the human condition and consciousness. This was the meta-narrative of Modernity—that science would disclose the nature of the world and that what was discovered could be used to predict fully the consequences of any action and hence to create a better life for all.

The dark events of the twentieth century have radically challenged this belief. Major geopolitical conflicts have been a tragic reminder that the growth of knowledge in and of itself does not improve the conditions of life. Science and philosophy have revealed fundamental limits to what we can know and say about the world. Quantum phenomena, especially, demonstrate that detached observation is a special case and that what it discloses is fundamentally incomplete. The physical world has turned out to be subtly interconnected at all levels. Discoveries in a number of sciences have likewise shown that reducing complex organic systems in order to study the simplified parts only provides a limited type of understanding. Organic systems are complex wholes whose activity is only predictable when severe constraints are imposed. They are intrinsically historical, self-organizing and exhibit emergent properties not pre-figured in any particular part of the system. Thus no inventory of parts at a particular instant, however accurate and complete, could of itself predict or explain how the system as a whole behaves.

This and the wider questioning of previously accepted cultural certainties have led to profound scepticism towards the myth of Modernism and similarly all-embracing meta-narratives. This is the Postmodern condition of knowledge (Lyotard, 1984), in which the cultural image of science as the systematic, progressive and authoritative disclosure of pre-extant reality, has been re-framed. As one commentator put it, '...the Enlightenment's ascription to science of a prescriptive authority whereby other forms of knowledge can be humiliated is itself an illusion ... a unitary scientific method, even a scientific world-view, is merely one of the many superstitions of enlightenment cultures' (Gray, 1995, p. 154).

Some critics claim that postmodernism is a rejection of science and of the very idea that there is an external reality that can be investigated by scientific methods (for example, Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 4). This is wrong; postmodernism does not reject science nor devalue the scientific method. The scientific method is a trustworthy way of investigating the world, postmodernism notwithstanding.

It is more appropriate to see postmodernism as a logical extension to critical realism, the position of most scientists. This assumes there is an external world but that to know it requires an open epistemological stance and a continual effort critically to develop more powerful theories about it. This is also the aim

of postmodernists, who seek to extend the resources of science by encouraging dialogue with other epistemological traditions. They are not attacking science or the rational empirical investigation but instead are creating a broader framework for knowledge, within which science takes its place as one among many ways of discovering, as the biologist John Haldane once put it, that 'the universe is not only stranger than we suppose, but stranger than we can suppose'.

The postmodern condition is one of radical pluralism, in which new meaning is synthesized from critical conversations between different traditions. No one view or intellectual framework need be taken as pre-eminent or final nor can a single conceptual vocabulary predominate. All forms of knowledge need to be approached historically. To engage with them requires becoming aware of how they were constructed and for what purposes.

This means a fundamental change in attitudes towards what is known. The modernist ideal of knowledge was that which was firm, factual and objective; something could be stated in the absolute, logical language of mathematics and geometry. In the postmodern framework this sort of knowledge, while it is accepted as true within its own domain, is regarded as an exception. The more general rule is that truth is made, not found. It is a function of context, a 'way of seeing' relative to a point of view and created within human discourse.

Critics object that if this is all that 'postmodern' means, then it is little more than a decline in confidence, an unproductive retreat into obscure relativism where nothing is morally or intellectually certain. Now there is indeed a danger here, since postmodernist discourse can degenerate into an impenetrable private language. Not only that, but in some cases this language is so misused that it becomes meaningless (for example, Sokal & Bricmount, 2003).

But such misunderstandings are due to the over-wrought language used in postmodernist literature. It remains clear that there has been a real cultural shift with a distinctive character. Postmodernism removes barriers to integration both within and between disciplines (Griffin, 1992, 1998). Used with proper caution, it is the means to bring about constructive advances in human knowledge and practice. The following section illustrates more fully what is meant by 'constructive' by briefly considering the case of quantum physics.

The significance of quantum phenomena

Quantum phenomena are one of the major discoveries of twentieth century science. The predictions of quantum theory have been confirmed by experimental observations to a degree that makes it the most successful theory in the history of physics. Its applications underlie a vast range of scientific and technological practices including much of the information processing technology that has transformed our world.

But for all that quantum phenomena are well enough understood, well enough, for example, to have been the basis for major technological innovations, their deeper nature is still a puzzle. They show that there are limits to what we can

know about the physical world. They show that if there are fundamental building blocks of matter they are more like events than substances. They show that events in what appear to be spatially separate places are interdependent such that they are occurring in what is effectively the 'same' place. They show that physical events can occur without any cause that human inquiry can disclose.

Summarizing these extraordinary findings, one could say that while physicists can agree what quantum phenomena *are*, they are at a loss when it comes to what they *mean*. We remain in what Popper called a 'metaphysical muddle'. This has led more than one physicist to say: 'If you're not mystified by quantum physics, then you haven't understood it properly'.

What makes the findings of quantum physics even more intriguing is that they have the flavour of consciousness about them. For example, when Paul Dirac, a major figure in the development of quantum physics, was asked what brings about physical events for which causes cannot be found, he replied: 'Nature makes a choice' (Malin, 2001, p. 127). Now physicists occasionally use phenomenological language such as 'choose', 'know', 'want' and 'feel' to describe the behaviour of substances. But we generally take this to be metaphorical and assume that the literal use of these predicates is reserved for living, intentional systems.

And yet in quantum physics we are far more likely to encounter this sort of talk. Now to say a particle 'knows' something may make those seeking to reduce mental events to physical ones uneasy. However, for those with a more open stance towards the mind–body problem, the attribution of elementary sentience to matter itself is exciting and suggestive.

Wolfgang Pauli, a major figure in the development of quantum physics, was deeply impressed by the implications of quantum phenomena. With the psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung he explored an integrated world view, one that Jung, borrowing from medieval alchemical traditions, called the *unus mundus*, the 'unified world'. This was an ontological claim that there exists an underlying level of Being that is both mental and material. Jung, who called this the 'psychoid' level, puts it thus: 'It accords better with experience to suppose that living matter has a psychic aspect and that the psyche a physical aspect' (Jung, 1953, Vol. 10, para. 780); and again: 'Microphysics is feeling its way into the unknown side of matter, just as complex psychology is pushing forward into the unknown side of the psyche. Both lines of investigation have yielded findings which can be conceived of only by means of antinomies, and both have developed concepts which display remarkable analogies' (Jung, 1953, Vol. 14, para. 768).

Antinomies, that is, apparently irreconcilable truths, are signs that we have arrived at the boundaries of what we know, where concepts may have to be revised or relativized. The difficulties of applying the findings of quantum physics to psychological research indicates the presence of just such a boundary. Such conditions, though, can lead to distortion. Quantum phenomena are all too often misused to support shallow mysticism or vague anti-scientism. Yet, despite their misuse, there is something about quantum phenomena that hints at consciousness. This is to be welcomed since, unless we are to regard consciousness as a

special case, somehow outside the natural order of things, the science of matter must be the science of consciousness too.

What makes quantum physics seem so relevant to consciousness is not that it shows us what the physical world is, but what it's not. It shows that the ontology of nineteenth century physics, the classical scientific worldview, cannot be taken as the final word. That framework, while powerful and correct within its limits, encouraged the idea that consciousness had to be qualitatively different from the physical world, perhaps the property of a special substance like Descartes' *res cogitans*.

It is here that the pluralism of the postmodern turn becomes relevant. Quantum physics is not only a scientific theory, but also evidence of a deeper shift away from the classical worldview, which was also the worldview of modernity. The significance of any scientific theory lies not just in what it may be telling us about the physical world but also in how it changes how we think about broader issues, such as the place of consciousness in the material world. The discovery of quantum phenomena along with other developments, such as dynamic systems theory and chaos theory, has profoundly changed the scientific worldview. This change is not yet well understood and is often over-extended, but even so it allows us more freedom than before to investigate how the mind and matter may be related. This freedom can be expressed in a postmodern synthesis of issues that may have had to be kept separate within a modernist framework.

The postmodern re-appraisal of science makes it easier to recognize that scientific inquiry, as well as being an empirical exercise based on rational logic is also a creative construction driven by aesthetic, religious and cultural values. This was the view of Pauli, who also believed that as we probe more deeply into matter, we encounter mind-like phenomena. Jung believed that as we probe more deeply into the psyche we discover a material world of archetypal forms.

Jung remains a marginal and controversial figure in Western psychology. Pauli tended to conceal his deeper beliefs, only sharing them in letters to his closer colleagues. If we are to take radical pluralism seriously, we can approach the proposals of Pauli and Jung with a new even-handedness. They are not to be taken as right or definitive. Instead we may seek a critical accommodation, and an open-minded exploration of what may or may not correspond in different epistemological traditions. The significance of this situation here is that we may treat the interaction between Buddhism and scientific psychology in something of the same way, rather than assuming *a priori* that it is a category mistake to compare religion and science.

This is particularly important when we recall that scientific psychology emerged from a late nineteenth century union of philosophy and physiology, when science was making confident progress and religion was in retreat. This confidence was felt in the life sciences too, and since nature included mental life, the founders of modern psychology expected the discipline would eventually become a branch of physics. Religions were dismissed as superstitious dogmas inherently opposed to science. They would be left behind as humanity ascended into the broad

sunlit uplands of rational acquaintance with its own condition. Ernst Haeckel, the advocate of Darwinism in Germany, declared in 1899: 'The great abstract law of mechanical causality now rules the entire universe, as it does the mind of man. It is the steady, immutable pole star, whose clear light falls on our path through the labyrinth of the countless separate phenomena' (Haeckel, 1899).

While most founders of scientific psychology shared such extreme materialist views, some did not. Fechner, for example—whose credentials as an experimentalist were impeccable—nonetheless wanted psychology to engage with the subjective realms of mental life, even with mysticism. William James, although he too was as enthusiastic as Haeckel about a science of mental life conducted in laboratories equipped with 'great brass instruments', took a more modest view of what merely physical investigations could show: '…nature in her unfathomable designs has mixed us of clay and flame, of brain and mind, the two things hang indubitably together and determine each other's being, but how or why, no mortal may ever know' (James, 1918, p. 200).

James notwithstanding, the ethos of psychology in the twentieth century was mechanistic and remains so. Explicitly or otherwise, the discipline is conducted in the belief, or hope, that nature, including human nature, can be completely understood in terms of physics. It is this that makes the postmodern turn and the quantum conundrum significant. For psychology to adopt the metaphysics of nineteenth century science is an encumbrance. The dynamic unfolding of human mental life is the most complex phenomenon known to science. Within it, patterns of organic causation dialectically unite parts to wholes and the wholes to parts. Attempting to isolate particular parts, particular types of causes, and to reduce the whole to a physical system alone, is quite inappropriate as a general epistemological framework. A pluralistic discipline in which views from other traditions can play a role is what is needed.

This is not to reject science's findings or its methodology. It is, however, to recognize that what they may have led us to think of as universal and absolute are actually more relative and historically contingent than we supposed. Richard Rorty takes this as a sign of intellectual maturity. Like his role-model John Dewey, he feels it is naive to believe that science and philosophy are discovering eternal, pre-extant, truths. Instead, they are participants in the constantly diversifying conversations through which human beings attempt to coordinate their views of the world and to lead their lives together. As Rorty puts it: '…many of the things that common sense thinks are found or discovered, are really made or invented' (Rorty, 1999, p. xvii).

This does not mean that enthusiasm for science has diminished. Life sciences like cognitive neuroscience and informatics presently have the status that physics and chemistry had at the end of the nineteenth century. However, the cultural context is different. Given the concern with the ecological impact of human activity, science and technology are treated with caution rather than being uncritically hailed as progressive. Scientific discoveries are not now taken to be the privileged disclosure of how the world 'really is'. Instead, they are treated more as provisional

creations suffused with cultural values. They are part of what Ernest Becker called the 'fragile fiction', the symbolic worldview which people construct in order to make sense of a world not of their making (Becker, 1971).

Rorty notes that it is no longer possible to establish what he calls a 'normal discourse'. This is a primary explanatory vocabulary which necessarily underlies all other ways of describing the world. The belief that a normal discourse exists and can be found drives the scientific search for 'Theories of Everything'. The same belief underlies ill informed fears of science. More informed fear of science is that even though a normal discourse cannot be found, if science to be driven by the belief that it can, it is likely to be harmful. Informed or otherwise, the fear of science is the fear that the world, and us with it, will be made too comprehensible. As Rorty puts it, 'The fear of science, of "scientism", of "naturalism", of self-objectivation, of being turned by too much knowledge into a thing rather than a person, is the fear that all discourse will become normal discourse' (Rorty, 1980, p. 388).

It is with this fear that the theoretical and methodological pluralism of the postmodern turn can help. Practices and insights from other systems of knowledge are entering into a new and more balanced discourse with science (Griffin, 1988). This is not mere 'anything goes' relativism, but a move towards the discursive production of knowledge through dialogue. Rather than one particular tradition claiming to have the final say, new meanings are synthesized in informed conversations between traditions. Inevitably, the movements of history will mean that from time to time some traditions will have greater influence than others. Presently globalization gives undue weight to Western traditions and distorts Eastern ones, but with the rapid rise of India and China this is bound to change.

Thus, and in contrast to the condition of intellectual culture when modern psychology appeared, the interchange between Western science and Eastern traditions can proceed in a more even handed way. This being the case, interaction between Buddhism and psychology can be looked at in a new light. Both traditions aim to discover the nature of mental life, so even though they originate from very different cultural contexts this should not rule out genuine critical interaction between them. Additionally, the postmodern turn has precipitated changes in psychology that are discussed in the next section. The significance of these changes, like those in physics, is that they make interaction between Western and Asian traditions more plausible.

Changes in psychology

Postmodernism has diversified both the theory and methods of psychology (Gergen, 2001; Kvale, 1992). The changes to be sketched here concern the return of consciousness as a central topic of mainstream research and the acceptance of feeling and experience as primary psychological data. These developments are helping to rid psychology of the implicit mechanism it inherited from the intellectual context at the time of its emergence and which hinder interchange with other traditions for investigating mental life.

The mechanistic metaphysics of nineteenth century science and ethos of objectivity were both implicit in the two paradigms that dominated modern psychology, behaviourism and cognitivism. As a result psychology in this period was wary of subjective data and consciousness was either ignored or reduced to neurological mechanisms.

Behaviourism considered subjective mental processes to be methodologically intractable. As they could neither be observed directly nor quantified, no properly scientific account could be given for them, and thoughts, feelings, emotions and consciousness were virtually ignored. Behaviourists limited themselves to observing the external manifestations of mental life and it seemed almost to be a point of honour to deny common experiences any place in psychology. In this the model was the timeless world of classical physics, where nothing objective can be found to correspond with the subjective experience of 'now'. Thus, for example, the experience of time, with a remembered past and an anticipated future, was merely phenomenological illusion that would, eventually, be dispelled by more objective data.

Behaviourism was successful up to a point and has left a legacy of effective techniques. But it also had major shortcomings, and many experiments of the era were unnatural, animals pressing levers in cages being the paradigmatic case. It was also unable to provide a satisfactory account for reflexive and open aspects of human mental life, such as language and creative problem-solving.

Concern about such shortcomings reached a critical mass soon after the halfway point of the century when behaviourism was rather suddenly displaced as psychology's central paradigm in what is sometimes called the 'Cognitive Revolution' (Gardner, 1985). Cognitive psychology, or cognitivism as it will be called here, approached the mind as if it was an information processing system like a computer. Computational models of mental processes were tested against human performance in more natural experiments on perceiving, remembering, making decisions, solving problems and using language.

By the end of the twentieth century, cognitivism had become the principal paradigm of mainstream psychology. The assumption was that the essence of mental life is computational and hence, since it could be formalised as quasi-mathematical instructions, it had to be treated separately from culture and even from biology (see, for example, Newell, 1991; Gardner, 1985, p. 6). However, the vocabulary was expressed in third-person terms, that is, how the mind seems from the outside. How it seems from the inside, the first-person world of feelings, values and experience, was secondary. This was something that would be properly understood once psychology had framed a universal theory of cognition in computational terms.

Thus, cognitivism, like behaviourism before it, left psychology at a reductive impasse. To assume that a complete, formal computational account might be found for human mental life harks back to the reductive mechanism of the late nineteenth century. Although cognitivism has been useful, computation *per se* no longer seems a plausible candidate for a universal psychological theory. It

has become clear that to seek a computational theory of mind, which is in any case merely an attempt to give psychology the authority of natural science, was a restrictive mistake.

This restriction is easing and alternatives to the cognitivism approach have appeared. Here we will deal briefly with three of them: connectionism, dynamic systems and embodied cognition. While fairly technical matters in themselves, their significance here is that they open the way to more realistic interaction with Buddhism.

Connectionism is a critical response to the idea that the activity of the brain was, essentially, computation. Brains lack the necessary functional architecture to make this proposition biologically plausible. Instead of well-defined locations where information is stored and processed, brains comprise densely interconnected networks whose patterns of activity are far more fluid than formal computational theory requires. Connectionism is an attempt to understand this activity from the bottom up, as it were, by making models of the massively parallel activity of natural nervous systems. These networks can be autonomous and become actively attuned to their environment.

How well neural networks serve as psychological models, is not yet clear. Even the very largest networks so far constructed are minute when compared with natural nervous systems. Whatever their significance turns out to be, the point of interest here is that connectionist models are necessarily historical. Cognitivism proposed that the essence of mental life could be captured in formal computational principles that were hence independent of the history of the mental being concerned. Connectionism, by contrast, is a psychological theory without essences. Where cognitivism proposed rules and representations, connectionism proposes only connections, activity and history. These are taken to be analogous to the activity underlying mental life. Any particular state of a network, and thus by analogy any mental state, is explained in terms of the conditions that gave rise to it. There is a striking resemblance here to the Buddhist view that mental life reflects the ceaseless arising of conditions.

Other critical responses to cognitivism are the closely related dynamic systems approach and theories of embodied cognition (for example, Clark, 1999; Van Gelder & Port, 1995). Taken together, these paradigms treat mental life as a reflection of the particular evolved organic system in which it is expressed. While cognitivism treated organisms as if their nervous systems were computationally identical, the embodied dynamic systems approach by contrast takes the nervous system to be engaged in a cyclic process of adjustment to the flow of action in which particular organisms participate. Now different organisms act in fundamentally different ways. Accordingly, rather than treating all nervous systems as if they performed identical computational functions, the dynamic systems approach treats them as participants in unique patterns of activity. However, these patterns are assumed to extend beyond the organism and to reflect the particular conditions in which the activity occurs, activity in the whole system being a form of sensitive chaos. The similarity to Buddhist notions of interdependence is again striking.

The growth in connectionism, theories of embodied cognition and the dynamic systems approach all indicate that psychology is 'Reclaiming Cognition' from the mechanistic metaphor of cognitivism (Nunez & Freeman, 1999). Mental life cannot be formalized. Instead, it has to be treated as an aspect of organic action, inseparable from the biological and cultural processes which are its vehicle. With the move towards embodiment, emotion and feeling are once again being treated as the core of mental life (Damasio, 1996, 1999).

This is not a new idea, William James having recognized just that when laying the foundations of the Science of Mental Life, to use his never-bettered name for psychology. That James' insight was subsequently so thoroughly ignored shows how far behaviourism and cognitivism took psychology from the world of everyday lived experience. There, it is patent that feeling, and not reason, is the essence of psychological life.

The reclaiming of cognition has prompted an explosion of interest in consciousness, bringing psychology face to face with awareness itself (Chalmers, 1997; Shear et al., 1999). Consciousness is once again at the centre of the research arena, where William James originally put it. It is a uniquely significant phenomenon for scientific investigation since, to investigate it properly, science will have to enlarge both its methods and its worldview. Phenomenological methods are increasingly used in psychology and since there is some unfamiliarity and mistrust of them, traditions where such methods have been used for millennia are recognised to have something to offer.

These developments will be important for the interaction with Buddhism in the coming decades, which is the concern of the final section of this article. The section will also offer some observations on the role Indian thought considered more broadly may play in the globalised problems that are facing us now and which seem set to become more serious as the twenty-first century unfolds.

Problems, prospects and possible outcomes

From a popular Western viewpoint, many Indian traditions can appear colourfully mystical and detached from everyday life. But this is to project on to them a distinction between religious and secular matters that originates in Europe and has far less significance in Indian intellectual history. It is easy to miss how the breadth and refinement of, say Vedānta, is grounded in a refined critical analysis of the relationship between mental and physical reality. Likewise, the continuity of the erotic and the spiritual, while a commonplace in Hinduism, can seem inappropriate or even blasphemous in some Abrahamic traditions, while the psychological insights found in early Buddhism, are given relatively little attention compared with the meditative techniques on which they are based.

This sort of selective distortion was very much in play during the eras of cognitivism and behaviourism, when the ethos of mainstream psychology was essentially that of nineteenth century science. The assumption was that religious traditions, being concerned with beliefs and values, could have no real interaction

with science, the latter being concerned with hypotheses and empirically testable facts. Faith and reason do not mix; to compare them was a category mistake.

This attitude has restricted contact with most Indian psychological thought, although psychologists did occasionally note that Buddhism presents an account of mental life comparable with Western systems (for example, Thouless, 1940; Suzuki, Fromm & De Martino, 1974). There was also an increase in contact with Buddhism in the 1960s but it suffered from the superficiality of the then fashionable engagement with all things Eastern. Subsequently, though, there has been more informed work (for example, Payne, 2002).

The prospects for interaction are improving, but many limitations remain, some of them being distant echoes of the assumed opposition of science and religion. But, ironically, since science now provides most people with their creation myth, their image of themselves and an understanding of their relation to the rest of the universe, it has had to take on the cultural roles of religion. For most scientists this is unwelcome as it seems to compromise the integrity of science. But this would only be true if science is inappropriately saddled with being a uniquely authoritative, progressive human understanding, replacing all others.

Now science does in fact deserve a special place—it has permitted the technological control of the material world to an unprecedented degree. However, the postmodern re-appraisal shows that science's hypotheses and methods also reflect their cultural context, just as much as other cultural practices do. To frame a hypothesis about a phenomenon is to express a belief about what sort of a thing it might be. Likewise, to choose a method of observation is to make a value judgment about how best to allow a phenomenon to disclose itself. The choices and beliefs found in science will reflect their cultural context just as much as those expressed in, say, religious traditions.

It is unrealistic to believe that science is somehow outside the more universal arena of inquiry within which Indian traditions also approach the common phenomena of human existence. Vedānta provides an inclusive ontology covering both mental and physical levels of being. Buddhism investigates mental life in ways that have been critically and systematically developed over millennia. There is every reason to suppose that traditions such as these will complement the scientific investigation of the mind. It is unhelpful to reject them merely because of the supposed incompatibility of science and religion inherited from the last few centuries of Western thought.

More helpful is the postmodern shift in the scientific worldview which has begun to transcend the limitations of nineteenth century mechanicism. This change began some decades ago and by 1995 had become clear enough to lead one commentator to observe, '…has there perhaps been an intriguing sea-change in much of contemporary science, such that, after several hundred years of specific concentration on the linear and the inanimate, we are now beginning to seek out those physical properties of nature that actually mirror the form of our own existence?' (Hunt, 1995, p. 59). For Western science to discover that nature exhibits physical properties that 'mirror the form of our own existence' is for it to arrive at

the point from which *Vedic* traditions began (for example, Narasimha, 2004). The last decade or so has seen a resurgence of Western interest in pan-experientialism, the idea that sentience may exist at all levels of nature (for example, Clarke, 2004; de Quincey, 2002).

Such an idea would have seemed absurd at the end of the nineteenth century, when mechanicism seemed the universal rule while consciousness was the exception. Now, as discoveries in quantum physics and in dynamic systems theory bring such beliefs into question, the situation has almost reversed and we find suggestions that consciousness must be considered as a fundamental aspect of nature (for example, Chalmers, 1997; Strawson, 2006) and that to make a division between the mental and physical realms is to introduce a false boundary into the universe (Bohm & Hiley, 1993, p. 386). As the editor of a recent symposium on science and religion puts it: 'A revolution is in process in our view of the cosmos. Rather than expiring as mandated by the second law of thermodynamics, … scientists … find a natural tendency in the cosmos to organize into nested orders of complexity' (Gregersen, 2003, introduction).

To summarize, mechanistic metaphysics is being displaced by an organic, process-like worldview (Gregersen, 2003; Griffin, 1998). Process philosophy is an enduring strand in Western thought that stretches from pre-Socratic philosophers, such as Heraclitus, who may in any case have been influenced by Indian traditions (for example, McEvilley, 2002, p. xxxi), to more recent figures such as James, Bergson and Bohm (Rescher, 1996; 2000). Although they express it in different ways, these philosophers shared the view that mind is a part of, not apart from, what Whitehead called 'the creative advance of nature' (Whitehead, 1920, p. 178). It is significant here that process philosophy is again attracting attention, since paradigm shifts actually start with a revision of implicit metaphysics (for example, Gare, 1999, p. 128). Also significant, and anticipating a theme that will end this chapter, it is noteworthy that the resurgence of interest in Bergson has been linked to the current concerns with the effects of human activity on the environment (Gunter, 1999).

These changes reflect a deeper return to process in Western metaphysics. This lessens hindrances to the interaction with Buddhism and other Indian traditions. These hindrances tend to linger on in psychology. Since the discipline has had to struggle to gain the status of a science, it is slow to notice that the scientific model it strives to imitate has been superseded. But with the decline of cognitivism and with the return of vigorous interest in consciousness, there has come an increased contact with phenomenological traditions (Varela & Shear, 1999). Treatments of selfhood and of the place of consciousness within the wider order of nature are now appearing. These are often influenced by Buddhism (for example, Macy, 1991; Clark, 1991; Parfitt, 1987). The resemblance to *annatta*, is direct and striking. Instead of a Cartesian substance, selfhood is seen as dynamic, interconnected, primordially relational and fundamentally without essence (Pickering, 1997).

In fact, this is not a good time for essentialism in general. The mechanistic

metaphysics of the nineteenth century has been overtaken by a process worldview, which is activity without essences. In theories of evolution, development and cognition, a systems view is displacing attempts to explain the dynamics of complex wholes by attributing causal powers to their parts (for example, Oyama, 2001). Rather than some unique human essence or nature, the view is now being taken that cycles of contingent causality are the underlying field of being from which organic action, human cognition and culture emerge (Rosch, 1994). In psychology too, interaction with Buddhism has recovered from the superficiality of the 1960's and now demonstrates maturity and critical depth (for example, Rao, 2002; Waldron, 2000).

Questions arise here that go beyond mere methodology to the purpose of investigating the mind. Buddhism values personal, direct investigation as it is readily available and, with appropriate training, the distortion introduced by personal preferences and assumptions can be reduced or even eliminated. Such investigation is considered to be intrinsically valuable since it enables the investigator to live more skillfully. Cognitivism, by contrast, following the ethos of nineteenth century science, put most value on depersonalized investigation, which, apart from logical truth-values, was otherwise assumed to be value-neutral. How skillfully psychologists themselves lived was neither here nor there. Of course, in the spirit of science as a sign of beneficial progress, it was assumed that cognitivism would eventually help to improve the conditions of life.

However, the postmodern turn takes us beyond the unlikely fiction of value-neutral knowledge. Knowledge becomes value laden by virtue of the manner and purpose of getting it. Scientific ends often begin as and always end up as technological means. This is particularly important for psychology to take on board since it is the science that is most directly mirrors the human condition. If psychology ignores feeling, concentrates on rational cognitive processes, marginalizes subjectivity, adopts mechanistic metaphysics and aims for prediction and control, then the outlook for human autonomy is poor. The actual experience of human beings cannot appear in such a science. It is as if we look into a mirror only to find we are not reflected in it.

If instead psychology's metaphysical framework was the ceaseless arising of conditions without essence, then it would more directly reflect the world of lived experience, as William James proposed. The developments in psychology that have been sketched here, especially the embodied treatment of cognition and the increasing influence of dynamic systems theory, shift attention towards wholes and away from parts.

Methodologically too, things are also changing for the better. Phenomenology, qualitative methods and first-person data, have rapidly become more acceptable in mainstream psychology. It is clear that while third-person data are reliable and powerful, is a reductive mistake to assume that on their own they could provide a complete account of experience. To understand how human experience is bound up in the systems that support it will also require first-person investigation, changing science's methods and its image. This is the peculiar challenge in

investigating consciousness—to preserve the integrity of scientific methods whilst at the same time broadening them to treat the world of lived experience.

Buddhism starts with that world and deals with it in ways that everyone, including scientists, can recognize. While scientific psychology makes a distinctive contribution, it is nevertheless a highly specialized one, tied to a particular era and cultural milieu. Cognitivism did not in general help people to understand their own experience, nor was it intended to do so. By contrast, the accessibility and endurance of Buddhism testifies that human beings can recognize in it something universal about their own lived experience.

Now the findings of science are also supposed to be universal. However, while this is easily demonstrable in the physical sciences, it is less so in the life and social sciences and in mainstream experimental psychology, it is even more questionable. Science expresses the outward-directedness of Western thought over the last millennium. This dominates the study of the mind, despite the fact that the principal thing we know about it is our inner experience, what mental life feels like from the inside. Third-person descriptions of mental life are taken to be uniquely reliable. First-person accounts, by contrast, have been treated with suspicion in Western psychology because attempts to use them have been said to have failed. This suspicion extends to meditative traditions where there appears to be no equivalent of the controlled experiments and publicly verifiable data required of scientific research. Even serious research on meditation can still lapse into something akin to orientalism by treating meditation as an anthropological curiosity—an esoteric practice of another culture, often by implication, a more primitive one.

Those more familiar with Indian traditions will recognize that this is not a well-informed position. The practice of meditation can be as systematic and critical as any scientific programme. Charles Tart, a psychologist with highly respected scientific credentials as well as experience with meditation has recently put it thus: 'My professional and personal studies on consciousness, especially mindfulness meditation (vipassana), have convinced me that ordinary consciousness is quite undifferentiated and unskillful at observing its own manifestations— hence the failures of early Western attempts at an introspective psychology that was to be a science of the mind per se. But we can learn to become much more discriminative observers of our own mental processes. Western psychology gave up far too early trying to become a science with mental events as primary data—we simply weren't trained' (Tart, 1999).

But mistrust of meditation is also diminishing. It was due in part to the projective distortion of Indian traditions of which we are now more aware, following the work of Carl Jung, Edward Said and the postmodern insight into the vicissitudes of working with knowledge. It was also in part a reaction to the superficiality of the 1960s, when Indian traditions were too often trivialized into spiritual fashion-accessories. Things have improved greatly in the past few decades with better teachings and more balanced research. Many psychologists, like Tart, now have some experience of the direct engagement with mental life that meditation provides (for example, Rosch, 1997).

However, despite the changes sketched here, the clear and important differences between scientific psychology and Indian traditions will need to be borne in mind. There will remain a necessary tension between meditation and conventional scientific methods. Private experience obtained under special conditions and after special training does not rest easily alongside the public data of experimental science.

Many psychologists, though, are beginning to recognize that the way forward is not to exclude any method of studying mental life but continually to enrich their synthesis. Moreover, in the conditions created by the postmodern turn, globalization and the ecological crisis, psychologists, scientists and others are asking more urgent questions about both the nature and value of their disciplines.

So what?

The synthesis suggested above may enrich psychological research but it also raises a broader question: what sort of knowledge of the mind do we want and why do we want it?

Presently we appear to be facing a serious ecological crisis, the basic cause of which is the alienation of human experience from the broader natural order of things. This alienation can be traced back to the scientific revolution in Europe, which was a struggle between free thought and the repressive forces of corrupted religion. That struggle won, science and technology explosively increased human control over nature, eventually creating the runaway world in which we now live.

But, as the cultural philosopher Walter Benjamin realized, when cultures lose control of the technological forces they have unleashed, the result is violence (Benjamin, 1936). While the most obvious forms of violence are between people, like wars, in the background there is a prolonged war against nature that began with the industrial revolution. Nature has become transformed from a home for life into mere resource for human purposes. In this condition, which many people experience, both consciously and otherwise, as the painful destruction of our own home and that of our descendants, there is a deep malaise. People living urban lives dominated by technology, no longer feel at home in the world.

Thus, the ecological crisis is at base a psychological crisis. However, most contemporary Western psychology ignores it and instead merely investigates human mental life in a spirit of scientific detachment. This would be perfectly legitimate if human beings were living sustainably, but there is mounting evidence to show that we are not. We have been consuming natural resources faster than they are replaced for over twenty years now. Of course, here 'we' refers to people living Westernized lifestyles. But, driven by the images that pour out of television and the Internet, people in rapidly industrializing countries like India and China naturally aspire to such lifestyles. Dream-like fables of desirable things leap off screens and into the minds of children, exciting and conditioning the next generation of consumers to grasp for lifestyles the earth cannot support without violence.

It has been estimated that if the present population of the earth were all

to live Westernized lifestyles, the natural resources of two extra earths would be needed. But they are not available; the world's population is rapidly increasing and space travel is not an option. There is widespread recognition that in a world being eaten up by excess, to live simply does not just mean to live well but simply to live. The collective project of human kind thus has to be to conserve the capacity of the earth to sustain us all.

It is here that Indian psychological traditions in general can play a unique role. There is a deep ecological sensitivity to be found in their earthy *Vedic*–Harappan origins (for example, Chapple & Tucker, 2000; Shiva, 2005). More specifically, Buddhist views of the human phenomenon stress its organic interdependence on the world around it (Macy, 1991; Schumacher, 1973; Hillman, 1995).

More ecological destruction is inevitable as the globalized forces of technology pass further out of human control. We have to accept that the momentum of contemporary geopolitics being what it is there is not going to be a rapid change of direction here. But in the longer term perhaps we can hope for a slower and more fundamental change towards a stable condition, where human lifestyles have moderated and converged to a equitable and sustainable global balance (Hillman, 2004).

The political and economic changes this requires have to begin in human feelings rather than in intellectual discussion. As Theodore Roszak puts it, 'The great changes our runaway industrial civilisation must make if we are to keep the planet healthy will not come about by the force of reason alone or the influence of fact. Rather, they will come by way of psychological transformation. What the earth requires will have to make itself felt within us as if it were our own most private desire' (Roszak, 2001, p. 48).

A psychology that merely deals in mechanized models of the intellect will be of little use here. Thus the changes sketched above are a move in the right direction. Likewise, an informed synthesis of Western and Eastern traditions will help create a more balanced science of mental life and one more relevant to the problems facing us. This objective is not confined to psychologists, but has been expressed by scientists of all types. For example, Heisenberg, a major figure in the development of quantum physics, when speaking to Jagadeesh Mehra in 1975, observed: 'You know, in the West we have built a large beautiful ship. It has all the comforts in it, but one thing is missing: it has no compass and does not know where to go. Men like Tagore and Gandhi and their spiritual forebears found the compass. Why can this compass not be put in the ship, so that both can realise their purpose?' (Dutta & Robinson, 1995, p. 443).

Achieving such a synthesis while doing justice to both communities of knowledge will be difficult. But although it is easy to mis-attribute to Indian traditions things which are merely projections of contemporary Western concerns, with sufficiently sensitive scholarship, it can be done. Nor should the capacity of Western systems for radical revision be underestimated, as the rapid return of the process worldview demonstrates.

So long as these difficulties are recognized, they need not hinder the pursuit of

the even-handed coming together of universal wisdom the world so badly needs. In the contemporary 'Runaway World' of increasingly complex cultural blending, we find a condition foreseen by Sri Aurobindo in 1914: 'The world today presents the aspect of a huge cauldron of Medea in which all things are being cast, shredded into pieces, experimented on, combined and recombined either to perish and provide the scattered material of new forms or to emerge rejuvenated and changed for a fresh term of existence' (1970, p. 1).

We see that Indian traditions can play a unique role in the coming century, helping with the common task of reducing unsustainably high levels of consumption and creating a more just world order. More than ever before, the troubled people of the global village are ready to recognize the wisdom in Gandhiji's remark: 'The world has enough for everyone's needs but not for some people's greed'.

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Section 2

Self and Personality

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Introduction

The representation of psychic structure and agency constitutes a major conceptual challenge for psychologists. The challenge has been responded to from different vantage points leading to different problems, methods and applications. In general, while 'self' was treated as the perceived and experiential aspect of subjectivity, 'personality' was treated as the manifest and socially accessible part of self-experience. The objective part of the personality, which appeared to be known to the person as well as to others, was treated extensively, and a variety of theories and assessment methods were proposed. This became a preoccupation for differential psychology which specialized in the tapping of individual differences and which has become a strong commercial enterprise capitalizing on test development. In contrast, the concern for 'self' remained peripheral in the pursuit of modern psychology which has retained a behaviouristic posture as its major theoretical and methodological plank.

It may be noted that the notions of self and personality in modern psychology grew in recognition of the challenges posed by the need for a comprehensive and holistic unit of the functioning individual in the idiographic tradition. Mainstream positivist psychology dealt with concepts and processes such as learning, perception, memory, motivation and emotion as objects amenable to measurement, prediction and control. In this nomothetic tradition, individual differences were 'errors', and therefore not much attention was paid to them. Further, the adoption of a computational model of organism as central processor required researchers to assume that cognitive processes went on in the form of mechanisms that rendered assumptions about the self redundant. In the recent past, however, there has been a resurgence of interest in self-related processes and various aspects of the self (for example, self-esteem, self-determination, self-awareness, self-monitoring) have been attended to.

Cross-cultural and cultural psychological approaches indicate that not only do the structure and contents of the self vary across cultural settings, but, by endorsing specific types of the self, culture also influences the processes of cognition, emotion and motivation in significant ways. Another source of psychological scholarship about the self is psychodynamic theory in which intrapsychic processes, particularly emotions and developmental history of the individual, play a central role. These perspectives question the individualistic notions of the self and identity; and pave the way for considering other modes of self, such as familial-self,

relational-self, collective-self and spiritual-self. In most of these conceptualizations, the self remains some sort of a cognitive construction. While these analyses expand the scope of discourse on the self, they cannot capture the multi-layered account of lived reality, which is one of the hallmarks of Indian thought.

According to one of the major and widely held Indian perspectives, the self functions as a complex structure that has an unchanging core and diverse changing manifestations, which can be innumerable. The manifestations, including the body, are always in flux and are of shifting nature. The (real) self goes beyond these manifestations, whereas the shifting entities are no more than acquired identities (*upādhis*), and not the self or identity itself. The fundamental attribution error that one makes is that of establishing an unreal identity between the self and these acquired identities. Such an identity formation takes place because of conditioning, which results in identifying the self with what it is not. The postulate of a shared identity, or self as *ātman*, offers a common empathic ground for every person. Compared to this, the notion of I-centred or egoistic self is limited to the body and personal possessions—attachment to which, however, has substantial consequences for organizing one's personal and social conduct. The Buddhist view, on the other hand, denies any *ātman*-like self and upholds the notion of non-*ātman*. Neither worldview, however, reduces the burden: both rather demand organizing one's conduct in the light of *dharma*. Thus, the interdependence of the self with a considerable degree of responsiveness to the context becomes central to all human endeavours.

The Indian discourse situates the problems of human existence on a complex temporal horizon that functions at two levels—historical and ahistorical. The notion of *ahaṁkāra* constitutes the immediate, sensory, social and physical bindings and constraints. It covers the major shades of the self covered in modern self theories. However, the notion of the self in its spiritual and more inclusive mode transcends the immediate and the empirical. The newer interpretations of the self by Sri Aurobindo and others have ventured at recognizing the significance of inner subjective reality as a potential, dynamic and flexible growth centre which is part of a grand design of consciousness.

The shared common ground in the Indian tradition includes the concept of the three *guṇas* or strands/qualities constituting the empirical reality (*prakṛti*)—*sattva* (virtue, luminosity), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia). These *guṇas* are pervasive as they constitute the behaving person as well as the external environment. Thus people and objects both share these qualities and engender enough scope for mutuality and reciprocity. Health, for example, includes a state of congruity and consistency between self and the season (*ṛtusātmya*). The *Bhagavad Gītā* illustrates beautifully almost everything worth mentioning about the three *guṇas* by relating them to the domains of food, intellect, wisdom, action, and charity. It also provides a comprehensive analysis of the positive or divine (*daiva*) qualities that humans need to develop and the negative or demonic (*asuric* qualities) qualities that they have to avoid. The divine qualities include fearlessness, purity of the *citta* (mind stuff), steadfastness in the yoga of knowledge, charity, control of the senses,

sacrifice, study of scriptures, austerity, simplicity, non-violence, truthfulness, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, aversion to fault-finding, compassion, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty and absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from malice, and excessive pride. The demonic qualities include ostentation, arrogance, pride, anger, harshness, ignorance, lack of purity, bad conduct, lack of truth, lust, low intellect, fierce in deeds, false prestige, wrong views, impure resolves, anxiousness, sense gratification, adopting unrighteous means, attachment, lack of humility, intoxication with wealth and pride and domination by false ego.

These contrasting characterizations of the two sets of qualities bring home the point that human life is fragile, but by one's own initiative improvement can be brought in. The potential of uplift is there, and one may self-consciously engage in *yoga* (for example, *bhakti, jñāna*, *karma*) to move ahead on the path of self-realization. The expanded notion of Indian self extends an opportunity to empower human beings. This upward movement is not mere imagination and is exemplified by the lives of personalities such as Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi, to name just a few.

This section of the present volume tries to analyse some of the important issues pertaining to the self and personality in the Indian tradition. The first article by Kiran Kumar K. Salagame, 'Ego and *ahaṁkāra*: Self and identity in modern psychology and Indian thought', examines the concepts of 'ego' and '*ahaṁkāra*'. These terms have been used synonymously, and ego has been used as a translation of *ahaṁkāra*. Kiran Kumar points to the conceptual similarities and dissimilarities between the two terms, and outlines their implications for human development and well-being. The author carried out a series of empirical studies at the University of Mysore to study the concept of *ahaṁkāra*. The findings suggest that *ahaṁkāra* can serve as a meta-construct which can embrace many of the modern psychological concepts related to self and identity.

Priya Ananda and Ajith Prasad point out that Buddhist psychology has formulated various ways of analysing personality which may be termed as 'The models of personality in Buddhist psychology'. These psychological models are valuable in studying a variety of experiences—of the conventional involvement of ordinary beings, of those in the stages of the path to awakening, and the qualities of the fully awakened state. The authors indicate that these models are useful in analysing experiences related to sleep, dream, death, after-death state, etc. In this chapter, various models of personality available in Buddhist psychology are explored. The application of these models in understanding various psychological states and afflictions are also briefly touched upon.

Suneet Varma's chapter, 'Integral psychology: A new science of self, personality, and psychology', outlines a theory of personality based on Sri Aurobindo's conceptualization of the human being. Starting with the basic notion of self and personhood in various schools of contemporary academic psychology that are largely located in the lower levels of psychological functioning, the field of Transpersonal Psychology is used as a stepping stone to access the higher reaches

of humanity. A brief outline of the Advaita Vedāntic perspectives on personality then paves the way for Sri Aurobindo's neo-Vedāntic depiction of the person. Varma then indicates the potential of Integral Psychology in bringing about human unity. In the last section, the author outlines an approach to the transformation of emotions, and its role in psychotherapy.

In 'An integral approach to our psychic centre', Brant Cortright holds that psychology in the West looks from the outside in, whereas psychology in the East looks from the inside out. These two perspectives give two very different views of psychology. Cortright further notes that the outside-in view of Western psychology has developed very detailed, precise maps of the outer being, the body-heart-mind organism and the surface structures of the self; whereas Eastern psychology's view from the inside out has generated very detailed maps of our inner being and the spiritual foundation of consciousness. Each has essential knowledge about human existence, yet each focuses on only half of this psycho-spiritual totality. Cortright is of the view that each requires the other to complete it, and only in bringing them together does an integral view of psychology emerge. In this chapter the author brings about an integration of these two diverse streams of thought.

In the next chapter, Bahman Shirazi provides an outline of 'The Sufi path of self-transformation'. Beginning with a brief introduction to Islam (which means 'peaceful surrender' to the Divine Will), Shirazi notes that the process of spiritual transformation involves seven classical stages—awakening, abstinence, non-attachment, spiritual poverty, patience, God-reliance, and joyous certitude. The spiritual journey in Sufism begins with the *sharia* which is a collection of principles and practices that govern the day-to-day life of Muslims. The next level involves *tarigha*, which literally means a path which requires the expert knowledge of a guide (*sheikh*) to traverse. The third level of the spiritual journey brings the aspirant to a higher spiritual consciousness called *haghighat* (Truth-consciousness). The fourth and final level of Sufism is known as *ma'rifa* (Gnosis), which refers to direct knowledge and love of the Divine. The author points out that only persistence, patience and absolute purity of the heart and soul and total sincerity can bring the seeker into direct union with God consciousness.

Shivantika Sharad finally looks at 'Being an authentic self: Some insights from the lives of Sri Aurobindo and Mahatama Gandhi'. Sharad notes that authenticity has not been adequately researched or discussed in mainstream psychology and goes on to examine existential and humanistic conceptualizations of authenticity. Unlike existentialism, Indian thought is not centred on death, but towards the realization of the true Self and liberation. In the Indian view, striving to be authentic enhances and facilitates self-expansion and self-transcendence. Within this paradigm a search for true or authentic self is held to be the prime goal of human life. The author then illustrates the Indian conception of authenticity as a lived reality by discussing episodes from the lives of Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

7

Ego and *ahaṁkāra*: Self and identity in modern psychology and Indian thought

Kiran Kumar K. Salagame

'Know thy self' and '*ko'ham*' (who am I?) probably epitomize the Western and Indian approaches to the problem of human identity from ancient times. While the dictum, 'know thy self', is an injunction from the 'other', *ko'ham*, is an inquiry from 'within'. Though both of them aim at realizing the nature of one's true identity, they may be considered as representing the second person and first person or objective and subjective perspectives, and have formed the foundations of two different types of self—psychologies offering different perspectives on human nature *per se*. Ego and *ahaṁkāra* are representative concepts from Western and Indian traditions, which refer to human identity at a psychological level. They have been used synonymously and often *ahaṁkāra* is translated as ego. However, there are certain conceptual similarities and dissimilarities between the two. The purpose of this chapter is to examine these two concepts and their implications for human development and well-being.

In contemporary psychological discourse, the formulations related to psychological functioning in almost all domains are ego-centred. For example, psychodynamic theory uses a language that is replete with terms such as 'ego-strength', 'ego-weakness', 'ego-boundary', 'ego-loss', 'strengthening of ego' and 'ego-functions'. Similarly, Piaget, in his theory of cognitive development, identified 'egocentrism' as one of the characteristics of the stage of pre-operational thinking. Egocentrism is difficulty in seeing the world from another's outlook. 'Ego resilience' is another concept recently used in life span developmental context, which refers to 'powerful personality resource that enables people to handle midlife changes' (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2004, p. 514).

Similarly, the goals of psychotherapy are conceptualized as 'promoting autonomy', 'enhancing self-esteem', 'increasing self-regulation', 'achieving self-efficacy', 'facilitating self-actualization', and so on. It is observed that in general, the Western conception of the self is of an individual who is separate, autonomous and atomized (that is, made up of a set of discrete traits, abilities, values and motives), seeking separateness and independence from others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Prevalence of ego related constructs in modern psychology can be understood, both as a cultural phenomenon and as a matter of the range and depth of human consciousness studied. As a cultural phenomenon, these constructs gain importance because the psychological theories and methods developed in the West in general, and in the United States in particular, adopted the *individual* as the basic unit of analysis, affirming the individualistic bias of Western culture (Kim & Berry, 1993). Berry et al. (1992) observe that the notion that a person is a bounded individual has been central to the discipline of psychology in general, and to personality psychology in particular (Much, 1995). Since psychodynamic and other theories are rooted in Western culture, the formulations of psychopathology and therapy as well as the mental health profession per se, are guided by the Western ethos.

The Western view of the relation between ego and consciousness is spelt out clearly by Carl Jung, who does not admit consciousness without ego at its centre (Jung, 1971). The Indian tradition agrees that in the ordinary waking state the ego seems to be the centre of one's consciousness, but it does not limit consciousness to the ordinary waking state. It considers the ego too limited a construct to encompass the entire range of consciousness and human identity, and asserts that there also exists a type of pure consciousness, beyond all the dualities, called *cetanā* in its awareness aspect, and *caitanya* in its energy aspect. It is in this pure consciousness that it locates the real/true identity of a person, his *puruṣa*. From this perspective, the altered states of consciousness can be considered more appropriately as altered states of mind, pure consciousness being the substratum which remains changeless (Salagame, 1988). The distinction between pure consciousness and mind is crucial in the Indian tradition and has far-reaching implications for understanding human self and identity.

It is only in the last four decades, with the emergence of transpersonal psychology, that Western researchers have paid attention to the distinction between pure consciousness and mind, and the corresponding identity sense. In Eastern cultures the conception of a transcendental 'Self' is more prevalent than in Western cultures. It should be noted that Abraham Maslow in his last days recognized that human beings have a 'need for transcendence' and spoke of 'Being-Needs' (or 'B-Needs' for short), 'Meta-Needs' and 'meta-motivations' (Maslow, 1971). He was responsible for the establishment of Transpersonal Psychology.

Transpersonal psychology emphasizes the spiritual dimension of human nature. It considers man as divine and spiritual in addition to being an animal and uniquely human. Sigmund Freud, a physician by profession, boldly postulated a theory of unconscious mental process out of necessity to account for certain disorders. In a similar way, some Western psychologists and psychiatrists took the bold step of establishing Transpersonal Psychology (Sutich, 1969; Tart, 1975) and Transpersonal Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (Cortright, 1997; Scotton, Chinen & Battista, 1996) when they encountered 'peak experiences' and altered state phenomena. Within the discipline of psychology, psychoanalysis and transpersonal perspectives may be considered as marking a distinct shift from body to mind,

and from mind to spirit. They have turned towards Eastern traditions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, in their attempt to formulate new theories and models. Thus psychology has completed a full circle, recovering the soul/spirit that was lost on its way (Salagame, 2006).

Identity and self in Indian thought

The Indian perspective views human beings as bio-psycho-social-spiritual organisms. Hence, there are many concepts related to identity and self, referring to different aspects. Among them are: *ātman*, *puruṣa*, *jīva*, *dehī*, *kṣetrajña*, *ahaṁkāra*, *ahambhāva*, *asmitā*, *jñātā*, *bhoktā*, and *kartā*, which are used in different contexts with specific meaning and significance. They represent transcendental, empirical (physical) and psychosocial dimensions of human nature.

On the transcendental level, identity refers to *ātman* in Vedānta and *puruṣa* in Sāṁkhya. Since the *Upaniṣads* declare that the transcendent Self, *ātman*, is identical with the highest principle of the universe, *brahman*, (*ayam ātmā brahma*), the *Upaniṣads* also declare that this self is *brahman* or 'I am Brahman' (*ahaṃ brahmāsmi*). The notion of a transcendent Self, *ātman*, requires further elaboration because it is said to be beyond the distinction of subject-object. Viewed in this context, transcendence is really *not* an 'experience' in the ordinary sense because, transcendence implies no experiencer or experienced. The transcendent state of consciousness, if it can be called a state at all, is itself called Self, *ātman*. Hence, the idea of self here is not the same as the idea of self-sense on the empirical level or its psychological referent, and it is cogently articulated in *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* as follows:

> The Fourth (*turīya*), the wise say, is not inwardly cognitive, nor outwardly cognitive, nor cognitive both-wise; neither is it an indefinite mass of cognition, nor collective cognition, nor non-cognition. It is unseen, unrelated, inconceivable, un-inferable, unimaginable, indescribable. It is the essence of the one self-cognition common to all states of consciousness. All phenomena cease in it. It is peace. It is bliss, it is non-duality. This is the Self, and it is to be realized (MU, 7, Trans. Swami Sarvananda, 1976).

Thus *turīya* or the so-called fourth state of consciousness, vis-à-vis the other three—*jāgrat* (waking), *svapna* (dream) and *suṣupti* (deep sleep)—is the substratum of all phenomenal experience, irrespective of the state. Hence, as one follower of Vedānta put it (personal communication), *turīya* is the original condition and the real state; and all other phenomenal states of consciousness, including waking, are altered states from the *Upaniṣadic* point of view (Salagame, 1988). Thus, *turīya* is the 'ground' of awareness, on which waking, dream, deep sleep, and other experiences happen with a 'subject-object/self-other' duality as 'figure'. Therefore, *turīya* was considered as the essence of the one self-cognition common to all the other states, and was regarded as the Self to be realized—*sa ātmā sa vijñeyaḥ*.

This 'subject/self' of phenomenal experience is termed as *jīva* or *dehin* in the

Indian tradition, and they are incorporated into the linguistic structures of many regions. The person who undergoes the cycle of birth and death is *jīva* and it is at empirical plane. It is also referred to as *dehī* in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (II. 22).

> *vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti naroparāṇi |*
> *tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyanyāni saṁyāti navāni dehī ||*
>
> Just as a human being casts off worn-out clothes and takes on a new one, similarly, the owner of this body *(dehī)* gives up worn-out bodies and takes on new ones. (Author's translation).

The term *puruṣa* is also used in a pluralistic sense to refer to *jīva*. Thus the concept of person or individual or self or subject is represented by three terms—*jīva*, *dehin*, and *puruṣa*—in the Indian tradition. Padmapāda, the foremost disciple of Śaṅkara, gives a definition of *jīva* as follows:

> And that Jiva—of the nature of 'not this', conditioned as ego in the waking and dream state, and conditioned in sleep by avidya which has within it traces of the impressions (that the inner sense has left behind) which is the opposition of Jnana and which obstructs the light (of Atma)—keeps going forwards and backwards and as such is termed in Sruti, Smrti in common parlance as Samasari (the worldly person), Jiva, vijnanaghana, vijnanatma, prajna, sariri, sarirah, atma, samprasadha, purusa, pratyagatma, karta, bhokta, and ksetrajna.
> (*Panchapadika of Padmapada*, XXXIV 135, pp. 100–101. Quoted in Safaya, 1976, p. 213.)

In the preceding definition, we find that different terms have been used to represent the different aspects of the self in a conditioned existence. Their connotations are as follows:

- *Sansārin*—involved in worldly enjoyment and activity;
- *Jīva*—soul;
- *Vijñānaghana*—embodiment of discriminatory knowledge with a spiritual dimension;
- *Vijñānātman*—prime mover of discriminatory knowledge;
- *Prajñā*—self as cognizer;
- *Śārīrin*—one who is embodied;
- *Śarīra*—the equipment which enables the *jīva* to function in the phenomenal world;
- *Samprasāda*—the self-sense present in dream;
- *Puruṣa*—human being;
- *Pratyagātman*—self as *brahman*;
- *Kartā*—self as agent;
- *Bhoktā*—self as experiencer/enjoyer/sufferer;
- *Kṣetrajña*—knower of the field.

It is the identification with the *jīva* that is called *avidyā* (ignorance of one's true nature) or *ājñāna* (lack of transcendental Self-knowledge). Therefore, the tradition emphasizes on delinking the self-sense from *jīva*. All phenomenal experiences are

attributed to *jīva* or *dehin*, while *ātman* is 'experience-less', as the term experience is understood with reference to an empirical subject.

Ahaṁkāra is derived from the word *aham*. *Aham* simply means a feeling of 'I', as in the question 'who am I?' (*ko'ham*). The Sanskrit term '*aham*' is a nominative singular of the term *asmad*, a pronominal base from which several cases of the first personal pronoun are derived. *Asmad* refers to individual soul or embodied soul (Apte, 1988). *Ahaṁkāra* represents the sense of doership and ownership, thus serving as a generic term representing the cognition and the feelings associated with me and mine. In the Vedānta tradition, *ahaṁkāra* along with *buddhi*, *citta* and *manas* constitute what is called the *antaḥkaraṇa catuṣṭaya*, the quartet of the internal organ. In its technical sense *ahaṁkāra* refers to that aspect of the *antaḥkaraṇa* which provides a subjective frame of reference to experience (Rao, 1962). Rama et al. (1976, p. 70) illustrate it thus: '… when a sensory-motor mind functions, a rose is seen. But when *ahaṁkāra* adds its influence, I see a rose.' Thus *ahaṁkāra* appropriates the experience to itself, leading to an affirmation of the sense of an objective world as perceived by the subject—resulting in increasing differentiation between subject and object serving as the principle of individuation. *Ahaṁkāra* also refers to the feeling of individuality/uniqueness, one's identifications and the sense of differentiation of oneself from the other, the 'I' from the 'not-I'. Thus, the term *ahaṁkāra* refers to the subject in the subject-object duality in the realm of mind/psyche, and therefore it is more appropriate to translate it as 'self-sense'. On the other hand, scholars often translate the term *ahaṁkāra* in English as 'ego', 'egoism', 'egotism', etc. (Salagame & Raj, 1999).

In the ontological sense, *aham* represents 'being'. Hence, when the question is asked as to who this being is, in the first person as 'who am I?' (*ko'ham*), it has different referents, depending on the level at which it is understood—transcendental, empirical and psychological. For example, one may say *ahaṁ ātmā* (I am *ātman*), *ahaṁ puruṣaḥ* (I am *puruṣa*), *ahaṁ jīvaḥ* (I am the embodied soul), *ahaṁ bhoktā* (I am the experiencer) and *ahaṁ kartā* (I am the doer). A layperson's understanding from his/her daily experiences is that whoever is that 'experiencer' or the 'subject' who participates in all experiences during *jāgrat* (waking state) is the real self. This includes our body, our mental states and our social relationships. So we incorporate most experiences of *jāgrat* as part of our identity or self-sense, and deny some of them into our self-structure, which constitutes the Freudian unconscious. Hence, a layperson's identity is largely bio-psycho-social (Salagame et al., 2005).

A layperson also usually treats experiences that occur during *svapna* (dream state) as not part of reality (exceptions being certain tribal people—Tart, 1969), though at the time of dreaming their reality is no less than those of the *jāgrat* experience. Similarly, many other types of experiences that may happen to people are rejected as figments of the imagination, dreams, hallucinations, delusions, far-fetched ideas and so on. In other words, they are treated as non-real. Thus, whatever one tends to identify with, becomes part of reality; and whatever one denies, becomes unreal. Hence a vast domain of possible human experiencing is declared unreal.

In the Indian tradition, all experiential phenomena which involve a subject-object (*vyakti-viṣaya*) duality, like the experiencer (*bhoktā*) and the experienced (*bhogya*), the observer (*dṛk*) and the observed (*dṛṣya*), the knower (*jñātā*) and the known (*jñeya*), are considered to be in the realm of *manas*, or mind[1] in its broadest sense. From the Indian perspective, all types of human experiences involving subject-object duality—be it normal, abnormal, pathological, paranormal, religious or mystical—are all mental phenomena (*manovyāpāra*), however extraordinary they may be. There is a vast domain of possible human experiences which we now call paranormal and mystical, and Indian texts provided detailed descriptions of such experiences. They also discussed dreams, illusions, hallucinations and delusions (Sinha, 1985). However, they went a step ahead of the laity and modern psychologists in their analysis of the real and unreal. They declared that even the commonly understood self of *jāgrat* is actually non-real and declared that the only true self is that 'ground awareness', or *ātman*. This is the unique contribution of the *Veda* and the *Upaniṣads*.

Thus, the difference between most modern psychologists and the Indian view can be summarized as follows. The former affirm a narrow range of human experience as real and self, and they deny a vast domain as unreal. The latter declare all human experiences involving a subject-object/self-other dichotomy as not more than relatively real and as only 'figures' against the backdrop of a 'ground awareness' that is the only fully true reality; and the only real Self while the rest is seen as non-real and non-self. Hence, for them *jīva* (soul) or *dehin* (owner of the body) is also non-self and it is a wrong understanding to treat non-self as Self. This is *ājñāna* (lack of transcendental Self-knowledge), and leads to wrong identification with the non-self—*jīva* or *dehin* instead of Self—*ātman*, and this is seen as the root of all human problems and suffering. The solution lies in first obtaining the right understanding of the distinction between the non-self and the Self, called *viveka* (discrimination), through the process of listening (*śravaṇa*) (in modern times includes other means of acquiring information) and reflection (*manana*). The next step involves making a conscious attempt to overcome the wrong identification through a process of meditation (*nididhyāsana*). It is only then that a person becomes *jñānī* (Self-realized). Therefore, in the Indian scheme of understanding the self and identity, two processes play a crucial role. One is *viveka* or discrimination, and the other is *vairāgya*, or the process of dis-identification or detachment.

The question is who identifies with the non-self, who has to make the discrimination between the non-self and the Self, and who has to make the conscious attempt to dis-identify with the non-self? *Ahaṁkāra* is regarded as one of the *antaḥkaraṇa* ('inner instrument', mind) as the one involved in this process. Safaya (1976, pp. 221–222) observes that different schools have used different terminologies to refer to what is called the Mind, 'Sāmkhya named it *antaḥkaraṇa*, Yoga named it *citta* and Nyāya named it *manas* (*buddhi* etc., included in the same). Vedānta calls it *antaḥkaraṇa*, but enumerates distinctly the four aspects viz., *buddhi*, *manas*, *citta* and *ahaṁkāra*.' However, it is debatable whether the term *antaḥkaraṇa* as used in Sāṁkhya and Vedānta is generic in its meaning, or refers

exclusively to the cognitive aspect, requiring further research. On the other hand, *citta* of Yoga and *manas* of Nyāya are more generic in nature.

As Rao (1966) has clarified, according to Sāṁkhya the *buddhi* is only the *adhyavasaya* or discriminating principle in general. It does not have any 'individual' or 'egoistic' touch about it. So at this level the *puruṣa* does not even feel that he is the enjoyer or sufferer. It happens to be the function or contribution of *ahaṁkāra* to make the *puruṣa* strictly 'personal'. Further, Rao (1966) notes that self-consciousness or a feeling of personal identity cannot arise if the mental organ does not present something determinate to it. Though it is generally believed that it is a Sāṁkhya concept, references to *ahaṁkāra* are also found in the *Chāndogya* and *Praśna Upaniṣad*. In the *Praśna Upaniṣad* (IV, 8, Trans. Subramanya Sharma, 1947), *ahaṁkāra* is listed along with *buddhi*, *manas*, and *citta*. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII, 25, 1 & 2, Trans. Sachhidananda Saraswathi Swami, 1956) speaks about *ahaṁkāra* as self-sense, and points out that those who fail to discriminate between *ātman* and body will confound the self-sense with the body.

Elucidation of the nature and function of *ahaṁkāra* can be found in the *ślokas* related to *antaḥkaraṇa*, *aham-padārtha-nirūpaṇa*, and *ahaṁkāra nindā* in the *Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi* of Śaṅkarācārya. In *śloka* 103, Śaṅkara defines *ahaṁkāra* by stating that the *antaḥkaraṇa* dwells in the sensory and motor organs and in the body as *aham* with *abhimāna* (*ahamityabhimānena*) in the reflected brightness of *ātman*. In *śloka* 104, he states that it is to be understood as *ahaṁkāra*, which due to *abhimāna* (identification) becomes *kartā* (doer) and *bhoktā* (enjoyer), and also due to its association with *sattva* and other *guṇas*, will have *avasthātraya* (three states—waking, dream and sleep states). It is made clear that *ahaṁkāra* experiences happiness and sadness in relation to favourable and unfavourable circumstances, and therefore *sukha* (happiness) and *duḥkha* (sorrow) are its *dharma,* and not the *dharma* of the *ātman* which is *sadānanda* (forever blissful).

Śaṅkara further makes a distinction between *ahaṁkāra* and *aham-padārtha* (*Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi, ślokas*: 292–296). He equates *aham-padārtha* with *ātman* and elucidates it as the self-sense which remains even in deep sleep, and which is the witness even for *ahaṁkāra* and other functions. Therefore, he exhorts giving up *abhimāna* (identification) with *māṁsapiṇḍa* (body made of flesh), as well as with that *ahaṁkāra* which has *dehābhimāna* (bodily identification), and is fashioned out of *mūḍha buddhi* (dull intellect). Further, Śaṅkara exhorts giving up *abhimāna* (identification) with *kula* (caste), *gotra* (clan), *nāma* (name), *rūpa* (form) and *āśrama* (stage of life), which are dependent on the 'living corpse' (*ardhaśava aśriteṣu*). He also exhorts giving up *abhimāna* with the doer and enjoyer of the *linga śarīra* (subtle body). Thus, in modern terms, Śaṅkara is exhorting one to give up one's sense of identity with bio-psycho-social and even psychical aspects of human nature—all of which constitutes *ahaṁkāra*—in order to realize the *ātman*, attain *śānti* and to realize *akhaṇḍa ānanda*—inseparable bliss, itself.

Thus, it appears that *abhimāna* is the essence of *ahaṁkāra*. Apte (1988) has listed different meanings of the term *abhimāna*, one of which is 'referring all objects to self, the act of *ahaṁkāra*, personality'. As mentioned earlier, Swami Rama

illustrates this with a very lucid example—'when sensory-motor mind functions, a "rose is seen". But when *ahaṁkāra* adds its influence, this becomes "I see a rose"' (Rama et al., 1976, p. 70). To see a rose, therefore, an 'I' is not essential. Similarly, to experience life, a sense of self is not essential.

According to the *Upaniṣads* and Vedānta, all problems start when this non-essential factor adds its influence in our lives. Therefore, *ahaṁkāra* is considered negative, and we find many *ślokas* denigrating *ahaṁkāra* (*ahaṁkāra nindā*) (14 as against 3 describing its nature) in the *Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi*. *Ahaṁkāra* is looked down upon with the following metaphors and descriptions (*ślokas* 297–310). It is *vikāra*, *duḥkha*, *rāhu*, powerful wild serpent, residue of poison in the body even after it is purged from a body, a thorn in the throat of a person taking food, an enemy to be slain with the sword of *vijñāna*, and fashioned out of *mūḍha buddhi* (dull intellect). Even after it is completely rooted out, if its thought is left for a while, it sprouts hundreds of *vṛttis* (mental modes, movements, and disturbances). Even after it is completely controlled, it should not be given scope through sense objects. If it is given any such leeway, it is like watering a withering lemon plant that will come into life.

Some Indian psychologists and philosophers have described the nature of *ahaṁkāra* in modern terms. Rao states: 'The general consciousness which is undifferentiated and rudimentary in course of time gets individuated. It acquires a subjective frame of reference and the process of individuation is afoot. This state, a further development of the capacity to be conscious of objects may be designated as self-consciousness. The Sāmkhya theory has brought into currency the expression "*ahaṁkāra*" to denote this. This is a word which superficially signifies "I making"' (1962, p. 41).

Srinivasan (1967, p. 199), interpreting the views of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta of Rāmānuja, states thus, '*Ahaṁkāra* is characterized by the contracted consciousness of the individual whereby he imposes on himself artificial and ego-centric "separative" limitation, conceives himself as divided from "God" and opposed to other individuals and lands himself in a state of struggle and suffering in the pursuit of selfish desires. This is the state of human bondage or inauthentic existence. Only by transcending this state of *ahaṁkāra* can the true status of the individual soul be realized.'

Safaya (1976) notes that according to Sāṁkhya, with the development of *ahaṁkāra*, the subject-object differentiation in living beings takes place. Joshi (1979) observes that through this process a false centre is created, around which one moves, and becomes a subject of constant friction and irritation. Rama et al. (1976, p. 70) observe that the I-ness inherent in *ahaṁkāra* 'provides a sense of separateness from the rest of the world, a feeling of distinction and uniqueness. It is the agency, which defines what of the sensory data and memories is "I". It is the property of subjectivity.' Ajaya (1983, p. 128) notes that as the distinction between 'not-I' and 'I' rigidify, the human being comes increasingly under the illusion that this distinction is real rather than an artificial creation of the mind. This illusion limits the human being from experiencing the 'holistic substratum of existence.'

Ahaṁkāra and ego: Some conceptual issues

In modern psychology, due to non-recognition of a transcendent Self, all discussions on the self terminate at the level of one's bio-psycho-social identity. Neither *ātman* nor *jīva* is accepted as real. Therefore, notions like life after death, reincarnation and transcendence are suspect. Engler (1986) notes that a classically trained psychoanalyst will have difficulty in appreciating the possibility of transcendence because it involves going beyond the personal identity or ego, which is the basis of healthy human functioning. This idea is reinforced by some studies on meditation, which show that those who have not achieved a reasonable amount of ego-integration are likely to break down due to meditative experiences (Boorstein, 1997). Hence, Engler (1986) made the famous statement that 'you have to be somebody before you can become nobody'.

An issue of far reaching clinical significance that is debated in this context is whether attempts at transcendence lead to psychopathology. The position postulated here is that such issues are semantic in nature and they arise due to incorrect translation of concepts from one language to another. For example, the exhortation in the *Upaniṣad*s is only to lose *ahaṁkāra* in the sense of false identity in order to realize *ātman* the true identity, but not to lose *vijñāna* or *buddhi*, the discriminating principle, which is very much required to understand the difference between *ātman* and *anātman* (non-Self). What is emphasized in general in the spiritual traditions is to go beyond the limited identifications, *but certainly not to lose those ego-functions, which keep a person sane*.

Freud and other early psychoanalysts used the concept of ego to include both the identity sense and many other functions collectively referred to as secondary process thinking (Bellak et al., 1973). Bellak et al. (1973) consider the sense of identity or self-sense (*ahaṁkāra* in the Indian context) as one of the twelve ego-functions. It was only later that self-psychologists used the term 'self' to refer to the identity sense and retained the term ego-functions for many of the secondary process functioning (St. Clair, 1986). Hence, there is a need to understand and articulate the Indian and Western concepts more sharply. Thus, the contention here is that the concept of *ahaṁkāra* and the concept self of self-psychologists are nearer to each other than *ahaṁkāra* and the psychoanalytic concept of ego-functions.

Understanding *ahaṁkāra:* An empirical approach

To examine some of these issues, this author initiated a series of studies in the Department of Psychology, University of Mysore. Archana Raj (1993), Shireen Gaur (1994), Rekha (1995), Pannaga K. Murthy (1999) and Parimala (2001) worked on this topic for their post-graduate dissertation. In 2001 and 2002, Kiran Kumar collected data on large samples of students from the University of Mysore and the Makrere University in Uganda. The findings of the first study are reported elsewhere (Salagame & Raj, 1999), while findings from the other studies are detailed in Salagame et al. (2005). A summary of the findings of all these studies is provided here.

From the findings and the trends emerging from the analysis of different sets of data the following inferences were drawn. *Ahaṁkāra* is a different construct than ego as defined by psychoanalysts and the functions of the latter appears to be conceptually more similar to the functions of the *buddhi*. The four main components of *ahaṁkāra* derived theoretically, are vindicated from factor analysis. They are Identification, Individuality, Agency and Separation. The Identification component of *ahaṁkāra* as measured in this study in terms of one's associations, attachments (*mamakāra*) and attractions (*moha*) may represent the most important aspect of *abhimāna* and thus validates the theoretical analysis of Śaṅkara, with regard to the essence of *ahaṁkāra*. The concept *abhimāna* and Identification as measured here seem to be similar to Otto Kernberg's concept of internalization in his synthesized model of object relations theory and Freudian instinctual theory. Kernberg's process of internalization has three levels: introjection, identification, and ego-identity which are progressively more conscious in operation (St. Clair, 1986). *Abhimāna* seems to encompass all the three levels.

The factors Separation (*dvaita bhāva*) and Individuality (*vaiśiṣṭya*) of *ahaṁkāra* appear to be conceptually near to Margaret Mahler's concepts of Separation and Individuation. 'Separation and individuation have two intertwined and complementary tracks. The track of individuation involves the evolution of intrapsychic autonomy, by which the child assumes the characteristics of being his or her own individual. The track of separation involves the child's emergence from the symbiotic fusion with mother, and therefore a differentiation and disengagement from her...' (Mahler et al., 1975, p. 63 cf. St. Clair, 1986, pp. 106–107).

The findings show that there is a lack of uniformity in number and composition of factor structure which may suggest that people differ in terms of the composition of *ahaṁkāra*. It could also be due to variations in the number of items, their wording, response alternatives in different versions used and the different samples on which the data is collected. Nevertheless, it is possible to speculate that individuals may be differentially predominated by one or more components of *ahaṁkāra*. One person may have a greater *ahaṁkāra* in terms of uniqueness and Individuality, another in terms of Agency, a third in terms of one's attachments and Identifications and a fourth in terms of the extent to which one feels separated from the others. In other words, to use Sanskrit equivalents, one may be seeking *vaiśiṣṭya* (uniqueness and individuality); another may feel a strong self-sense as *kartā* and *bhoktā* (I am the doer and enjoyer); a third may seek self-sense in terms of associations, attachments, and attractions, *saṅga*, *mamakāra* and *moha*; a fourth may feel a strong sense of boundary in *dvaita bhāva*, separation in terms of self-other, with strong in-group-out-group feelings, strong likes and dislikes, etc. However, this can only be confirmed after ruling out the other possible psychometric reasons, for the obtained differences (Salagame et al., 2005).

Speculations and conclusion

The findings have the following implications for the development of a theory of

self and personality, psychopathology, psychotherapy, mental health and positive psychology from an Indian perspective. With the different components discussed above, the concept of *ahaṁkāra* can serve as a meta-construct that can embrace many of the modern psychological concepts related to self and identity, such as locus of control, self-efficacy, self-esteem, individuality, relational self, individualism-collectivism, ego-boundary and autonomy. The *ahaṁkāra concept with its components delineated here appears to be parsimonious* and it is possible to understand several contemporary theories of self and identity with reference to this meta construct.

It is possible to speculate that certain mental problems, particularly neurotic and personality disorders, can be seen as manifestations of under or over emphasis of one or the other component of *ahaṁkāra*. For example, a Type A person who may have problems, may be speculated to have the agency component, *kartṛtva*, overemphasized. Similarly, its under-emphasis may result in the sense of loss of control that is associated with many disorders. While over-emphasis on identification, *mamakāra*, *moha*, *saṅga,* results in all kinds of emotional problems and conflicts, under-identification may lead to psychopathic and anti-social tendencies. Similarly, the lack of *dvaita bhāva*, or feeling of self-other separation, except in transcendent phenomena, may lead to an undifferentiated psychotic state; and its rigidification may lead to obsessions, insulation, withdrawal, and the like. Hence, *there is here scope to build an indigenous theory of psychopathology and psychotherapy from an Indian perspective*. On the healthy side is the emphasis on *vaiśiṣṭya*, or uniqueness and individuality, which is required for self-actualization.

However, from an *Indian psychological point of view*, experiencing any of the above four components in greater degree is dangerous. All of them reinforce one's bio-psycho-social identity. *Kartṛtva*, *vaiśiṣṭya*, *dvaita bhāva*, *mamakāra*, *moha* and *saṅga*—all of them have personal involvement and investment, feeling of me and mine, which is *abhimāna*. While it is necessary to some extent for normal functioning, it cannot be the *ultimate ideal of growth from an Indian point of view*. While modern psychotherapeutic methods emphasize their development, the Indian tradition stresses that for further spiritual development, involvement in all of them is to be refrained from. For example, Sri Aurobindo says in one of his aphorisms, 'When we have passed beyond individualising, then we shall be real Persons. Ego was the helper; Ego is the bar' (1915/1998, p. 199). Hence the need for detachment from all of them. Only then can one experience true identity. Viewed from this perspective, the modern psychological attempt is to increase *abhimāna*, and thus *ahaṁkāra*, in the name of therapy and growth. Here is the difference between growth and self-actualization of modern psychology, and the Self-realization of Indian psychology.

Endnote

1 The word *manas* is also used in a much narrower sense to specifically denote the sense-mind.

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8

Models of personality in Buddhist psychology

Priya Ananda & Ajith Prasad

Introduction

A comprehensive framework for psychology should address a wide spectrum of applications. At one end, it should identify the limiting factors of the ordinary psyche and the scope of the perfected state that humans can realize. In this regard, it should also comprehend the profound mystical experiences of the practitioners of various spiritual traditions. At the other end, it should cover the pathological experiences of those struggling to cope with the travails of the mundane world. In the middle, it should also be applicable in the analysis of psychological tendencies and developmental opportunities of conventionally 'normal' individuals. Buddhist psychology, with its balanced approach combining structured rational analysis and first person accounts of direct yogic experience, is of great relevance in contributing toward the formation of a comprehensive framework for psychology.

Buddhist psychology is both a psychology of transformation and a theory of cognition. As a psychology of transformation, it aims to develop the innate psychic potential of every being to its perfection. The ordinary state of being is 'flawed' or pathological in the sense that one works with limited perceptions of the world and undergoes cycles of suffering and psychological tension in ceaseless attempts to cope with and respond to the world. These attempts fail to produce everlasting happiness because the perceptions about oneself and the world, which one formulates as the basis for action, are discordant with one's true nature. Buddhist psychology aims to transcend this entrapment. It begins the endeavour by analyzing the root cause behind this pathology. In the absence of such an understanding, one might go after an enlightenment ideal with the same pathological tendencies that tie one to the miseries of ordinary being; and thus remain contented with an intermediate state of blissful experience, where the tendencies leading to future suffering may still be dormant.

The goal of the Buddhist psychology of transformation can be viewed as triple-fold, corresponding to the three scopes of motivation on the Buddhist path.[1] The lower goal is about coping with the ordinary state of being while minimizing suffering. The middle goal is the ever-lasting liberation (*vimukti*) from suffering by eliminating afflictive tendencies. The higher goal is to achieve complete and

perfect awakening (*saṃbodhi*).[2] The process of awakening involves the attainment of total perfection in all dimensions of being, with their transformation into pristine wisdom (*jñāna*). The ultimate spiritual attainment on the Buddhist path, as described in the Great Perfection (*mahā-sandhi-yoga*, Tibetan: *rdzogs chen*) teachings, is to realize the primordial purity and spontaneous perfection of all appearances. This realization is inseparably coalesced (*yuganaddha*) with a display of unceasing compassion. This is a state completely transcending ordinary psyche, without grounding in or clinging to its distorted projections and being able to appreciate the truth 'as it is'.

Buddhist psychology is also a theory of cognition. This is an inevitable part of Buddhist exploration since the higher goal of Buddhist training is the attainment of *saṃbodhi* that eliminates all cognitive 'errors'.[3] The view of cognition that evolves through Buddhist psychology is that of the co-emergence of the person and the world. The distinction between inner and outer vanishes on deep analysis of the process of experiencing. Thus the scope of 'personality' in Buddhist studies includes the entire sphere of experience covering not only the person, but also the world as perceived by the person. The study of the dynamics of this co-emergence equips Buddhist psychology with ways of altering the person and the world thus brought forth. This knowledge is applied in eliminating the cognitive 'errors' of the ordinary state of being, and thus in relating to appearances in a whole new way as the person progresses on the path to omniscience.

An important theme running throughout Buddhist psychology is the five dimensions of underlying capabilities in which various aspects of personality and the awakened state are understood. At the mundane level, the manifestation of these capabilities in its distorted forms appears as the five aggregates (*skandha*) of personality. The aggravation of these distortions leads to five afflictions (*kḷeśa*), and to various psychological realms of experience. Through perfect awakening, clarified aspects of these capabilities manifest as the five aspects of the fully awakened omniscient wisdom (*buddha-jñāna*). These five clarified aspects are:

1. Seeing reality 'as it is',
2. Unperturbed clarity in knowing all phenomena,
3. Perfect distinction of all details of phenomena,
4. Sensing the happiness and suffering of all beings with the experience of one-taste, transcending ordinary pleasure and pain, and
5. The creativity of spontaneously-accomplishing actions.[4]

Buddhist psychology has formulated various ways of analyzing personality. These could be termed as 'the models of personality'. These psychological models are valuable in studying a variety of experiences like the conventional experience of ordinary beings, of those in the stages of the path to awakening, and the qualities of the fully awakened state. These models are also useful in analyzing experiences related to sleep, dream, death, after-death state, etc. In this chapter, various models of personality in Buddhist psychology are explored. The application of these models in understanding various psychological states and afflictions are also briefly touched upon.

The three turnings of the Buddhist view

These psychological models are presented with their own specific scopes of application in various phases of Buddhist teaching. The opinion among various Buddhist schools differs regarding how to view these phases together. A brief introduction to the three phases of Buddhist philosophy and the position taken in this chapter regarding an integral view is necessary before delving into the details of the models.

The evolution of Buddhist philosophy took place in three distinct periods renowned in Mahāyāna literature as 'the three turnings of the wheel of dharma'.[5] The first turning comprises the Buddha's teachings (as present in the Pali canon) that he gave to a wide audience. The second and third turning teachings were delivered to disciples who had already made progress on the path to awakening. The second turning, which became widely known around the second century, is centred on the *Prajñā-pāramita-sūtrās* of the Buddha. Madhyamaka philosophy was developed by *Nāgārjuna* based on these *sutras*, and was further established through the treatises of scholars like *Āryadeva, Śāntideva, Candrakīrti* and *Śāntarakṣita* (2nd–8th century CE). The third turning is based on a vast array of *sutras* such as the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, *Sandhinirmocana-sūtra*, *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra*. Maitreya, Asanga, Vasubandhu and others (4th century CE onwards), developed the third turning views further, through their treatises (*śāstra*) and commentaries. The second and third turning views were extended further in the teachings of Buddhist *tantrās* (*Vajrayāna*).

In the first turning, focus is on the most immediate problem of the individual—the suffering nature of ordinary existence and the possibility of going beyond. The suffering in this context is not just the apparent forms of suffering like those due to physical pain, emotional turmoil and boredom. Suffering in its broader context is the underlying psychological tension that pervades even happy states of mind. It is the struggle to cling to mistaken identities which keep drifting away like a mirage. Like the ecstatic experience of a narcotic addict while dipping into deeper agony, one expends enormous energy to create an island of happiness along with an ocean of underlying suffering. One sinks into deeper anguish as the island of ecstasy drifts away. The first turning teaches the recognition of the true nature of a person, as the way to freedom (*vimukti*) out of this mistaken struggle. In this context, the conventional personality is analyzed in great detail. The psychological models presented in this turning, analyze the constituents and operational dynamics of a person, in terms of underlying building blocks. This phase of Buddhist psychology is already finding applications in the modern context. The dialogues between Buddhist scholars, modern psychologists and cognitive scientists, as documented by Goleman (1997, 2004), shed light on this topic. Parallels between the decentralized view of mind developed in cognitive science, and the decentralized experience of personality emerging through mindfulness meditation in Buddhist traditions, were investigated by Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1993).

The second turning focuses on the ultimate nature of all phenomena including

the building blocks of personality. The aim here is to remove the veil of knowables (*jñeyāraṇa*) toward perfect awakening (*saṃbodhi*), in addition to the removal of the veil of afflictions (*kḷeśāvaraṇa*) which aid in the movement towards liberation, from suffering (*vimukti*). The psyche exists not in isolation but is interwoven with the rest of the phenomenal world. An understanding of the true nature of all phenomena is necessary to realize omniscience. The separation between psychology and ontology disappears as one transcends objectivism and subjectivism, in this view of dependent co-arising of psyche and the world. The *Madhyamaka* view establishes the profound groundlessness (*śūnyatā*) where no phenomenon can be self-arising or self-sustaining in isolation with the rest of the world. While drawing parallels between the Madhyamaka view and their work on enactive cognitive science, Varela et al. (1993, p. 253) state:

> There is a profound discovery of groundlessness in our culture — in science, in the humanities, in society, and in the uncertainties of people's daily lives. … Taking groundlessness as negative, as a loss, leads to a sense of alienation, despair, loss of heart, and nihilism. The cure that is generally espoused in our culture is to find a new grounding (or a return to older grounds)…. In Buddhism, we have a case study showing that when groundlessness is embraced and followed through to its ultimate conclusions, the outcome is an unconditional sense of intrinsic goodness that manifests itself in the world as spontaneous compassion.

The third turning of the Buddhist view shows how the realization of the most profound truth of groundlessness becomes the experience of ultimate purity of appearances, with its spontaneously accomplishing nature manifesting as the all-encompassing display of compassion. If the second turning does not generate such an experience, one has not reached the correct understanding of groundlessness (*śūnyatā*). One mistakenly falls to either the shades of nihilism—with resulting fear, dullness or indifference; or to the shades of absolutism—with resulting ego-centric aggression, despair, or anesthetic complacence. The third turning guides the practitioner towards perfecting the profound realization of groundlessness, through stages of progressively pure experiences. A phenomenological description of stages in the path (*bodhisatva-bhūmi*) to *saṃbodhi* is given as far as words can capture it. It describes the potential for full awakening (*Tathāgatagarbha*) as innate to every being. An elaborate and sophisticated model of psychology is developed in this turning. This may be termed as the psychology of spiritual awakening. The third turning has not yet been significantly put to use in modern psychology. However, there is tremendous value in studying the third turning model of personality, while developing a modern psychology of spiritual transformation. In this chapter, the model of eight-fold collection deals with the third turning psychology.

Reification of the building blocks of the first turning led to the realist schools of Buddhist philosophy like Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika. Reification of certain elements of the psychological model of the third turning led to idealist interpretations to schools like Vijñānavāda and Yogācāra. If one is careful not to make such reifications, the three turnings together provide a consistent and comprehensive

view. Many scholars of the Prajñā-pāramita tradition[6] of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism embrace such a view and accept all the three turnings. According to this view the three turnings are three phases of understanding. The first turning provides the phenomenology and psychology of mundane existence. The second turning presents the profound view of groundlessness that provides the ontological perspective. The third turning is the culmination where phenomenology and psychology of both mundane and enlightened experiences are seen in inseparable union with the ontological insight of the second turning. The approach taken in this chapter is such an integral perspective, with the philosophical basis of Madhyamaka. Influences of the second and third turning can be found in this chapter, even while discussing the first turning. This is intentional, and aims at bringing clarity to the whole theme from an integral perspective. With this approach, the models of personality from the first and third turnings become useful psychological tools, with varying subtlety and applications.

Model 1: The aggregate model of personality

The first turning presents two models for studying personality. The first is a schema of analyzing personality into its building blocks. According to this model, all experiences that arise as the continuum[7] of a person[8] are analyzed and categorized into five aggregates (*skandha*). The original aim of this model is to arrive at the realization of the ultimate nature of a person through direct observation of experiences in mindfulness meditation (*smṛti upastāna*, known popularly through the Pali term *sati-patthana*). This is the means to go beyond suffering produced by ego-clinging. The simplicity of this model along with the ease of direct observation makes it a good starting point to formulate the structure of personality. It also leads to the identification of five dimensions of capabilities that fuel the five categories of experiences. The aggregates are:

1. Form (*rūpa*): This is an experience that arises as a concretized and objectified view of phenomena. Form is not just the physical body of a person. According to Vasbandhu's *Abhidharma-kośa*[9] all forms, including the perceived external environment, belong to this aggregate. The objects of all five sense consciousnesses are considered to be forms—for example, shape and colour for the visual consciousness, and sound for the auditory consciousness. It also includes sense faculties. Asanga's *Abhidharma-samuccaya*[10] also categorizes the mental objects of perception like concepts and mental images into form.
2. Feeling (*vedanā*): This is an experience of a sensation that lies on the scale of painful (*duḥkha*), neutral and pleasurable (*sukha*). It is the subjective appreciation that senses suffering and happiness. It includes both sensual and mental feelings. The feeling aggregate only covers the basic feeling that comes as part and parcel of an experience. The process of building up additional emotional states and observable reactions is not in itself a part of feeling. However, such build-ups also result in feeling.

For example, becoming anxious is not a feeling, but anxiousness is experienced with its associated feeling of pain.

3. Perception (*saṃjña*): This is an experience of recognizing something within the field of cognition. This recognition is due to predispositions and familiarity, and is not a process of inference. However, the process of inference can lead to a generalized image corresponding to the direct experience under investigation. The experience of recognizing the generalized image would belong to the aggregate of perception. Perception could be about labelling a form to be a specific object, viewing a situation to be either desirable or threatening, perceiving a quality in an object, etc.
4. Formation (*saṃskāra*): This is an experience additionally fabricated in the continuum of a person in response to other experiences. Thus, the aggregate of formation is the reactive and responsive aspect of personality. The process of intellectualization (*buddhi*) through which one analyzes and infers is part of this aggregate. Emotional build-ups and behavioural aspects are also formations of various mental episodes (*caitta*, also known as *caitasika*) arising in dependence upon each other. In addition, through conditioning, the context of experiencing and directing attention into or away from specific aspects in the sphere of experience, formations alter future experiences.
5. Consciousness (*vijñāna*): It is the experience of being conscious of an object of experience. *Vijñāna* literally means 'qualified knowing' in which there are three spheres—the knower, the object of knowledge, and the process of knowing. In the first turning model, *vijñāna* is of six kinds—the mental consciousness and the five sense consciousnesses. Buddhist psychology treats these six as different types of *vijñāna*, since they know their objects through their uncommon aspects—for example, knowing the aspect of shape and colour for eye consciousness, and sound for ear consciousness. The experience of mental consciousness is about being conscious of concepts, mental images, recognitions, feelings, emotions, etc.

Vijñāna is to be contrasted with pristine wisdom (*jñāna*) knowing reality 'as it is'. Unlike *jñāna*, *vijñāna* is qualified and it remains specific through its entangled nature, where the prior experiences in the continuum colours the way knowledge arises. The field of knowing and the specific ways of 'seeing' are continually perturbed and modified in the process of knowing. So are the modifications of other aggregates too. The aggregates of feelings, perceptions and formations arise as the subjective aspects, and the aggregate of forms arises as the objective aspect, in the context of experience provided by *vijñāna*.

The aggregates are momentary experiences arising in an interdependent way and a person is none other than a continuum of such experiences. Each of the aggregates is closely related to and contains other aggregates. For example, the aggregate of perception could arise as the recognition of either an aggregate of form, feeling, formation or *vijñāna*. There could be a perception of feeling or vice-versa, a feeling of perception. Similarly, experience of form need not always correspond to

the appearances of material forms. It can also arise as the objectification of feeling, perception, formation or *vijñāna*. This corresponds to the objectification of mind (*citta*) as the agent behind experiences. Thus, *citta* can be viewed as the objective view of the subjective aspect of experience.

Model 2: The network model of mental continuum

The model presented above analyzes personhood as a continuum of experiences belonging to five dimensions. The second model from the first turning scriptures is that of main-mind (*citta*) and mental episodes (*caitta*, also known as *caitasika*). The cognitive and behavioural dynamics of a person are looked upon in this model as the interplay of mental episodes in an ever-changing continuum of the complex of *citta* and *caitta*. Personality traits evolve through this complex. This complex of *citta-caitta* corresponds closely to the meaning of the English word 'mind'.

The notion of *vijñāna* in the aggregate model and *citta* in this model, are synonymous to the extent that *vijñāna*—with its triple-fold division of the agent of knowing, the object of knowledge, and the knowing itself—and *citta* including its content, are mutually inclusive. The entity being studied by various terms like *vijñāna*, *citta* and *manas*[11] is the same. However, the perspectives from which they are looked upon are different. While *vijñāna* emphasizes experiences, *citta* emphasizes the apprehension of experiences as if through an agent.

In the *citta-caitta* model, the main-mind (*citta*) is the bare apprehension.[12] The stream of *citta* changes continuously as various objects, along with the apprehension of them, arise and vanish. The mental episodes are further apprehensions and reactions through the aggregates of feeling, perception and formation. In this model, the aggregate of form is considered as the content of *citta* and hence does not become an explicit element in the model.[13]

The actual types of mental episodes are numerous, while various scriptures enumerate around fifty. These are grouped into six categories. The first category is that of ever-present mental episodes accompanying each and every experience. These include contact (*sparśa*) between mind and its object, feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saṃjña*), volition (*cetana*) and mental engagement (*manaskāra*).[14] *Manaskāra* is the mental episode that keeps the person attentive to any given object of appearance, and helps in engaging deeper into the object. The second category is the mental episodes that are essential in ascertaining the characteristics of the object being engaged with. These include interest (*chanda*), determination (*adhimokṣa*), mindfulness *(smṛti*), one-pointedness (*samādhi*)[15] and insight (*prajñā*). The third category is of wholesome mental episodes. These are desirable and indicative of a healthy personality. The fourth and fifth categories include the primary and secondary unwholesome mental episodes which are undesirable for a healthy personality. Unwholesome mental episodes have the potential to produce suffering. The sixth category consists of changeable mental episodes for which the wholesomeness depends upon the context.

As a person engages with an object, various mental episodes ripen, based on specific karmic tendencies. The manifestations of various mental episodes condition

the mental continuum, making it either fertile or sterile for other mental episodes. For example, the unwholesome mental episode of bewilderment (*moha*) would weaken one-pointedness, and thus make the mental episode of insight shallower. As another example, there is less likelihood of the mental episode of anger arising in a mental continuum in which the mental episodes of patience are strengthened.

This model is considered important for mind training through meditation. Varying modes of using it are available, depending on the nature of the vehicle (Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna) that a person trains on. For example, the approach in Hinayāna, in general, is to apply mindfulness meditation to find and remove the causes that lead to unhealthy mental episodes. The approach in Mahāyāna is to cultivate an opposing mental episode as an antidote, such that the ground is sterile for unwholesome mental episodes. Such an approach works through understanding how the presence and strength of various mental episodes affect the enriching or diminishing of others.

Selflessness and emptiness

Due to their ever-changing nature, neither can phenomenal experiences on their own be a source of happiness or suffering, nor can they form a basis for permanent identity for the person. Clinging to experiences in this ever-changing continuum is the cause of suffering. As Asanga points out in *Abhidharma-samuccaya* (Trans. 2001), clinging could arise as a mistaken identification of self with experiences belonging to any of the five aggregates. It is a notion of 'I' around which other experiences are related as either favourable or threatening. Clinging to such notions provides mistaken frames of reference for actions, and binds the person to the cycle of suffering through discordant actions, causing undesired results.

Clinging to an experience of form arises with the mistaken notion of self as the body. Clinging to an experience of feeling (as in the bliss of *samādhi*) arises from the mistaken notion of self as the enjoyer experiencing its innate bliss. The perception of the label 'I' (as in 'I am') can be the basis for mistaken notion of a self as the perceiver at its own bare recognition (as in *asmitā samādhi*). The aggregate of formation is the basis for the mistaken notion of self as the agent behind action. A non-dual appearance of *vijñāna*, where no object of knowing is distinctly present, can be confused as the self experiencing its innate nature. Since all these experiences are constructed on the basis of various causes and conditions, attempts to cling to these experiences as self-nature lead to psychological tension and suffering. For example, the very attempt to cling to the bliss of meditation leads to anger and mental turbulence, when a disturbing stimulus shakes the person out of *samādhi*. Happiness is ever-lasting only when the basis is transformed (*āśraya-parāvṛtti*), leading to the co-emergence (*sahaja*) of peace with every sprout of experience.

In the first turning philosophy, various notions of self (*ātma*) are refuted through the view of not-self (*anātma*) to thoroughly eliminate all modes of clinging. The arising and subsiding of aggregates (including the subtler experiences in meditation) are observed to study their causes and conditions[16]. Direct recognition

of the momentary nature of all aggregates leads to the realization of the lack of a permanent abiding ground for the person in aggregates. It also leads to the realization of how futile constructions around an impossible notion of self leads to suffering. This realization of not-self (*anātma*) leads to abandonment of all clinging and discordant actions arising out of mistaken identity, and thus to liberation from suffering. Experiences are no more in the nature of suffering, as the conditions for suffering cease through the cessation of mistaken impulses. The peace one reaches is no more the constructed bliss of a specific state of being, but an unconditional one that is co-emergent with every sprout of experience. Once the mental continuum undergoes such a transformation, the experience of the phenomenal world can no more be the cause of suffering.

Refutation of the above notions of self is not a total denial of conventional experiences of a person. The emphasis is on removing the root-ignorance that confusedly identifies and clings to some of these experiences in the continuum (including the so-called transcendental experiences), as the essential nature of a person.

The removal of mistaken notions about the self of a person is sufficient for freedom from suffering, but not for omniscience. The insight into the true nature of reality is essential for this. The *Madhyamaka* view based on the second turning explores the true nature of all phenomena and asserts the lack of inherent existence (*niḥsvabhāva*). Madhyamaka recognizes that no phenomenon (including the notion of person and the constituent aggregates) can exist from its own side. Nāgārjuna invokes arguments of pure reason to establish the lack of inherent existence, the emptiness of all phenomena. Even the notions of causation, time, space, etc., cannot be established from their own side (*Mūla-madhyamaka-kārika*, Trans. 1995). A general idea about the doctrine of emptiness may be generated through an example. The existence of a table can be spotted neither in any of its parts like the platform or legs, nor as a separate and independent entity. A collection of all its parts does not become the table either, unless it is organized in a specific way that does a specific function to a perceiver. Hence, the collection of parts in itself does not contain any essential identity for the table. Many causes and conditions like the parts of the table, the designer, the carpenter and the user together give rise to the phenomenal experience of a table. Thus, the experience of table is a phenomenal appearance whose essence cannot be traced down to its components. The same argument could be extended deeper into its constituents like the platform and the legs to see that no object exists on its own. Even the perceiver that imputes a name to the object does not exist on its own, because the *citta* arises in dependence upon objects of experience.

The nature of appearances can be understood in terms of three concepts. These are emptiness (*śūnyatā*), conditional arising (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and dependent imputation (*upādāya-prajñāpti*). The first is the lack of inherent existence of phenomenal experiences from their own side. The second is about how the experiences of phenomena still arise through various causes and conditions based on other phenomena that are equally empty. Phenomenal experiences arise and vanish interdependently without any inherent self-support anywhere. Empty appearances

of phenomena support each other. The third is about the phenomenal appearance of *citta* as an imputation of conceptual notions to the ever-changing flux of conditional arising, based on suitability. This leads to a contextual view of truth. An example may clarify this. When one recognizes the constant flow of water, one imputes the concept of river. Though the water in the river flows by continuously and there is no river other than the flowing water, through conceptual imputation one cognizes a river that does not flow away with every drop of water.

When all such imputations are pacified, it leads to the direct realization of the truth 'as it is' (*tathātā*) that is non-elaborated (*niṣprapañca*). It is the inseparable coalescence of phenomenal experiences with their ultimate essencelessness. This is also termed the void sphere of reality (*dharmadhātu*). The scholar-yogi of Tibet, Longchen Rabjampa explains:

> The appearance of all things of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is based on the causal process of interdependent origination. These appearances are undeniable. They are the unceasing natural play of voidness (*śūnyatā*) [emptiness], like the play of light, the play of eddies and waves on the water and the rustling of the leaves. All things of relative reality are this way. Thus because appearances are irrefutable, there is the relative [conventional] level of truth. On the ultimate level there are no validly cognized objects other than the one taste of the absence of all mental fabrications (*prapañca*). Ultimate reality transcends the division of subject and object. It is the underlying stratum, the unborn, pure mode of existence of the appearances of the relative level. Thus the two levels of truth are inseparable. (Trans. 1979, p. 15)

Longchen Rabjampa describes this coalesced nature of the void sphere of reality further in these poetic verses:

> Ultimate reality is the mandala [the sphere of experience] of the perfectly pure expanse of voidness. It is like a 'magic' mirror. What unimpededly appear on it are all phenomena (*dharma*) of relative reality, your mind included. These things appear naturally on this 'magic' mirror, through and to your mind. There is no third reality of a truly existing mind or objects juxtaposed to the ultimate reality of the mirror and the relative reality of the images in it. (Trans. 1979, p. 18)

Dynamics of experience

The sphere of experience of a person is a conditioned view arising through imputations into this void sphere of reality. This appears as the mind (*citta*) and its objects. This limited sphere of experience is conditioned by the specific context in which a person's mental continuum evolved. Experiences and reactions continuously modify this context. New appearances of objects and *citta* arise in this ever-changing context. Detailed understanding about this dynamics can be derived from the third turning and *vajrayāna* teachings.

This ever-changing context of experience is related to imprints (*vāsana*). Imprint is like a thin fragrance left behind after the scent has evaporated, or like a stain still left behind on a cloth after many washes. The stains left by various experiences

blend together in forming the context for newer experiences. *Vāsana* acts like a filter that constraints the breadth and depth to which a *citta* penetrates reality. It leads to the formation of a conceptually projected view of reality that prevents further penetration into the true nature. This results in certain grounding of the awareness (*vidyā*), making the experience specific to a frame of reference. This specific frame of reference results in distorted contextual knowing (*vijñāna*) as opposed to the pristine wisdom (*jñāna*) that an ungrounded awareness with its omniscient expanse and unhindered penetration can achieve. A few examples would help in making this clear. A room might be pleasant for a person, too hot for another, and too cold for yet another—all at the same time. Past experiences and expectations lead to this difference. Depending on *vāsana*, one penetrates reality differently and sees either a river that is unchanging or the flowing water. There can be similarities in *vāsana* for an entire species of beings. Thus, humans experience a lawn to be beautiful to watch, and soft to touch. A dog might not appreciate the beauty, though it still finds it soft to roll on. A cow might find the same lawn tasty! The structure of the human eye that constrains the visual consciousness to objects of certain dimensionality (not seeing microscopic structures for example), may be said to be a bodily *vāsana* that humans carry by being embodied into a certain cognitive structure. Removing all *vāsana* is essential as part of breaking the veil of knowables (*jñeyāvaraṇa*) towards omniscience. This is called the veil of knowables since the conceptually projected images of knowables obstruct the knowledge of the truth as it is.

Another stream of modification in the mental continuum of a person is the urge for action that arises as the ripening of karmic tendencies (*karma-bīja*). The distinction between *vāsana* and *karma-bīja* is thin, since the very appearance of an experience involves an imputation which is an implicit action. In addition, actions lead to modification of the context of experience. Similarly, the very urge to act arises in the context of experiencing. However, it may be termed that *vāsana* predominantly deals with how experiences arise and *karma-bīja* about how a person reacts to experiences.

Karmic tendencies are habitual associations made in the mental continuum between situations, actions and results from the past. For example, having responded many times in the past in a certain style creates a seemingly automatic urge to respond in a similar style when such situations arise again. Similarly, having experienced immediate happiness due to a particular action many times in the past, creates an urge to act in such a way again. For example, venting out anger might give immediate relief to a person, though it leads to unhappy after-effects like a disturbed state of mind and angry retaliations from others. This might lead to the development of a habitual association between venting out of anger and the experience of immediate relief, further leading to similar urges in future. Once a person habituates with letting out anger whenever the urge arises, the mental continuum turns into a fertile ground for the mental episodes of anger to arise often with little provocation. Karmic tendencies from a multitude of experiences reinforce each other. This may be viewed as a non-linear dynamics that sustains and reinforces a tendency till it drives the person into experiencing a karmic result.[17]

The aggregate of formation arises from the ripening of karmic tendencies based on situational conditions.

Every moment of awareness arises with an innate creative potential. However, the karmic tendencies severely condition and narrow down the way this creativity manifests. Karmic tendencies mixed with root-ignorance about selflessness lead to afflictive obscurations (*kleśāvaraṇa*) that bond a person to the experiences of suffering.

Model 3: The eight-fold collection

In the third turning philosophy, personality is analyzed in terms of the context and the structure of experiences, by focusing on the experience of knowing (*vijñāna*). The formation of personality is explained as the dynamic interplay of:

1. The ever-changing continuum of the context of experience,
2. The basic structuring of experiences in that context,
3. The formation of the sense of self, and
4. The arising and vanishing of specific experiences.

In this model, personality is viewed as an eight-fold collection consisting of seven consciousnesses (*vijñāna*) and the defiled mentality (*kḷṣṭa-manas*). The seven are the all-ground consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) along with its projections, through the mental and sense consciousnesses. According to the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (Asanga, Trans. 2006), the mental and sense consciousnesses are also known as functional consciousnesses (*pravṛtti-vijñāna*). The dynamics of the eight-fold collection is described in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*:

> Like waves that rise on the ocean stirred by the wind, dancing and without interruption, the *ālaya*-ocean in a similar manner is constantly stirred by the winds of objectivity, and is seen dancing about with the *vijñānas* which are the waves of multiplicity. (Trans. 1999, p. 42)

The eight-fold collection is as explained below:

(1) All-ground consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*): This is the limited sphere of experience of a person that arises as a distorted view of the void sphere of reality (*dharmadhātu*) through dependent imputation. *Ālaya-vijñāna* forms the foundation for embodied cognition and defines the basic structure of all experiences. The *vāsana* and karmic tendencies (*karma-bīja*) lead to a biased perspective and structuring, and thus provide a context for all experiences in this eight-fold collection. Thus, *ālaya-vijñāna* is also regarded as the store house of *vāsanas* and karmic tendencies (*vāsanāparibhāvita* and *sarvabījaka*). However, it is neither the permanent identity of a person nor a form of collective unconscious. Continuous build-up and discharge of karmic tendencies cause the ever-changing nature of *ālaya-vijñāna*. Though *ālaya-vijñāna* always provides the context to all experiences, a person in ordinary states of awareness does not become conscious of the subtle and direct experience of *ālaya-vijñāna* because the gross nature of functional consciousnesses dominates in such states.

(2) Defiled mentality (*kḷṣṭa-manas*): The mentality (*manas*) is the subjective aspect experienced as the enjoyer (or as perceiver, knower, actor) of objects. The mentality is defiled because it is constantly conceited with the idea of 'I am'. From the sphere of experience presented by *ālaya-vijñāna*, the defiled mentality arises as an experience of 'I'. Ācārya Mañjuśrīmitra, a renowned master in the lineage of *Mahāsandhi-yoga* teachings, explains:

> Depending on the power (*prabhāva*) of various *vāsanas* from the manifold formative forces of *karma*, the potential for experience appears forth as objects and subjective being (*ātma-bhāva*)... By taking the continuum of accumulating *vāsana* as the basis, mentality (*manas*) arises as an experience of *ātma* that does not exist. (Trans. 2001, p. 117)

As Asanga explains in *Abhidharma-samuccaya* (Trans. 2001), the notion of 'I' is conceited with the four defilements of—the perception of self (*ātma-dṛṣṭi*), self-love (*ātma-sneha*), the feeling of 'I am' (*asmimāna*) and the ignorance about the true nature of self (*avidyā*). The defiled mentality conceives a limited identity within the sphere of experience as 'mine' and provides a basis for emotional afflictions to arise trying to protect and enrich that identity. The thoughts of defiled mentality are subtle and do not become gross objects of knowing in ordinary experiences. However, it forms the subjective reference around which the six functional consciousnesses project and construct ordinary gross experiences. These projections in turn affirm the defiled sense of 'I'.

(3-8) Functional consciousness (*pravṛtti-vijñāna*): Mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*) and the five sense consciousnesses constitute the six functional consciousnesses. These consciousnesses arise as projections from the sphere of experience of *ālaya-vijñāna*. Ācārya Mañjuśrīmitra explains:

> By the power of formations (*saṃskāra*), the subtle (*ālaya-vijñāna*) is obscured and does not appear vividly, which gives rise to specific cognitive projections (*vijñāpti*). (Trans. 2001, p. 117)

These projections are ways of differentiating and knowing specific aspects from the sphere of experience that remains largely obscured. The examples for these specific aspects are forms and colours for eye consciousness, or images and concepts for mental consciousness. The ripening of karmic tendencies (*karma-bīja*) leads a person to project and follow specific aspects. Karma causes one to develop interest (due to afflictive emotions like attachment, aversion and closed minded ignorance) towards a specific aspect of this projection, which in turn leads one to modify the projection. Karmic tendencies lead to these afflictive emotions with the intent to protect or enrich the identity established by the defiled mind. One fabricates the ordinary realm of experience (*saṃsāra*) by following after and concretizing various projections. The sphere of experience of *ālaya-vijñāna* with its accumulation of *vāsana* and karmic tendencies provides the basis for such functional projections to arise continuously. The functional consciousnesses are so called because they are entangled with and work towards bringing forth an objectified world. They are localized in the sense that one makes objectified projections of specific aspects, while

no more remaining conscious of the rest of the sphere of experience. Thus one remains unaware of the experience of *ālaya-vijñāna* when functional consciousnesses dominate.

The *ālaya-vijñāna* and defiled mentality are regarded as stable because their ever-changing continuum is present at all times. The functional consciousnesses are unstable because they arise and subside contextually. For example, the six consciousnesses are dormant during dreamless deep-sleep. The coordination between the six functional consciousnesses is established through the *vāsana* and karmic tendencies that continually modify the basis of projections—that is, the *ālaya-vijñāna*.

It may be noted that the six functional consciousnesses are always dualistic in nature. These cognitive projections arise with the three spheres of knower, known and knowing. In contrast, *ālaya-vijñāna* is non-dualistic from the point of view of the object-subject division. Depending on the context of experience, *ālaya-vijñāna* appears with the multiplicity of phenomenal distinctions. It can also fade out into an appearance of a unified stratum in certain states of experience.

In the *Precious Treasury of the Meaning of Words* (Trans. 1989) Longchen Rabjampa clarifies the distinction between various terms like *ālaya-vijñāna*, *ālaya* and *dharmadhātu* appearing in scriptures of *sūtra* and *tantra*. He reveals the structure of personality more deeply. *Dharmadhātu* is the term for reality 'as it is' (*tathātā*) or the 'void sphere of reality'. All-ground (*ālaya*) is the unawakened (unenlightened) nature of a person and forms the foundational stratum for the continuity of *vāsana* and karmic tendencies. *Ālaya* arises when a person has root-ignorance (*avidyā*) of not comprehending the true nature of all phenomena. It modifies itself through the accumulation of *vāsana* and karmic tendencies. Longchen Rabjampa further divides *ālaya* into four aspects to illuminate its structure. These include (i) the all-ground of primordial nature (of root-ignorance) (Tibetan: *ye don gyi kun gzhi*) (ii) the all-ground of application (Tibetan: *sbyor ba don gyi kun gzhi*), (iii) the all-ground of various *vāsana* (Tibetan: *bag chags sna tshogs pa'i kun gzhi*) and (iv) the all-ground of bodily *vāsana* (Tibetan: *bag chags lus-kyi kun gzhi*). Of these, the first is about the co-emergence of root-ignorance with any sprout of awareness. The second and third are related to how the karmic tendencies and *vāsana* further shape up the structure of personality. A person associates with the sense organs and bodily structure to form a stable reference to experience, from birth to death. The stable structure of *vāsana* that forms one's specific cognitive structure from birth to death is the fourth category. *Ālaya-vijñāna* is the aspect of being conscious of the sphere of experience constrained by *ālaya*. According to Longchen Rabjampa, if *ālaya* is like a mirror, *ālaya-vijñāna* is like the luminous clarity of the mirror, and the functional consciousnesses are like the arising of reflections in the mirror (Trans. 2002).

Afflictions and psychological states

The constraints of the ordinary psyche and the resulting psychological traits are studied in terms of the five root afflictions (*kḷeśa*) and their derivatives. The

combinations of these afflictions result in various limiting psychological states. In Buddhism, the primary perspective to afflictions is not social ethics, but their potential to produce a state of suffering in a person. The root afflictions have a correspondence with the five aggregates. These afflictions are aggravated forms of distortions in relating to the world through the underlying capabilities of the aggregates.

The affliction related to the aggregate of form is bewilderment (*moha*), which makes one unable to engage with an object with single pointed concentration. One gets disinterested through distractions, becomes satisfied with a certain depth of knowing, gets confused through the multiplicity of appearances or remains afraid of deeper levels of truth. Thus one keeps wavering away from one object to another, without penetrating the appearances. Bewilderment can also be in relation to the mental objects of concepts, when one is unable to penetrate into the deeper layers of understanding.

The affliction of pride (*māna*) is related to the aggregate of feeling. Pride is an ego-centred approach where one looks for an enriching pleasurable sensation within the ego-boundary. One remains contented with ego-centric pleasures and fails to develop an appreciation of the interdependence of the entire sphere of experience. Attempts to enrich the pleasurable feeling within the ego-boundary as an isolate—without an overall enrichment of the entire sphere of experience—are not sustainable due to its interdependent nature. Intoxication (*mada*) is a related affliction, where one is overwhelmed with pleasure and remains too complacent to produce conditions for the sustenance of that pleasure.

The aggregate of perception has its associated affliction as attachment (*rāga*). In Buddhist terminology, attachment is differentiated from love and likeness. Attachment is the clinging to an object of experience with an exaggerated perception of its qualities. While focusing on a quality of the object, if one fails to discern the numerous supporting conditions that bring about its attractiveness, one mistakenly clings to the object as if it possesses the quality from its own side. One also fails to see the many alternate conditions that would have made the same object repulsive. This leads to clinging to the object for what it is not. One cultivates undue expectations and thus undergoes suffering due to attachment.

The root affliction of jealousy (*īrṣya*) is associated with the aggregate of formation. It arises as the result of aggressive pushes of karmically driven actions. With the mistaken notions of ego-boundary the person begins to compare the immediate results of actions with those of others, leading to jealousy. Thus the person loses focus on the basic intent behind the action, that is, the intent to move away from suffering towards happiness. It also leads to competitiveness (*mātsarya*) as the focus shifts to comparison of narrowly created concepts of results instead of genuine happiness. Thus one constructs greater suffering through narrow-sighted actions.

The affliction of hatred (*dveṣa*) is associated with the aggregate of *vijñāna*. Hatred is the aggravation of mental turbulences that distorts and clouds the faculty of knowing. This is the result of the perturbed nature of contextual knowing

(*vijñāna*), undergoing turbulent changes in its context. When the ego-identity is threatened in the face of an experience, the attempt to protect that identity arises strongly. It leads to unwholesome action and suffering. An unperturbed knowing may be compared with the surface of a still pond that reflects objects like a mirror. If a stone falls into the still pond, ripples appear at the surface and the sediments float up, turning the water muddy. The perturbed pond reflects the objects with distortion and lack of clarity along with added colours. Similar distortions happen to the process of knowing, when inflicted with hatred.

Buddhist psychology categorizes all ordinary modes of existence with their gross afflictions, into a psychological realm called the desire realm (*kāma-dhātu*—sphere of experience of desires). It is possible to cultivate states free of such gross afflictions through one-pointed meditation that calms the mind. However, such states of meditative absorption (*samādhi*) do not irreversibly transform the mental continuum. It still remains a fertile ground for afflictions which arise once the person comes out of the meditative absorption. The psychological realms corresponding to these states of *samādhi* are the form-realm (*rūpa-dhātu*—sphere of experience of forms free from gross projections) and the formless-realm (*arūpa-dhātu*—sphere of experience devoid of forms).

The desire realm is further classified into six sub-realms of psychological traits, based on relative dominance of one or the other affliction. One way of understanding the sub-realms is to consider them as six personality types among humans. In this categorization, the ordinary human psyche with a more or less balanced mixture of the five afflictions is one of the types. When any one of the afflictions dominates strongly over the others, the person belongs to the other five types. Over time, one could change the habitual tendencies and drift from one type to another. However, these variations are limited because of the stability provided by the all-ground of bodily *vāsana*.

A grosser shift in the psychological attitude comes up during rebirth. The continuum of a person during rebirth can undergo drastic changes in the way one relates to the world. This is because the stability provided by the all-ground of bodily *vāsana* is affected during death. The re-structuring of the all-ground of bodily *vāsana* happens in accordance with the psychological type acquired through the specific mixture of the five afflictions. This can lead the mental continuum to a sphere of experience completely different from human experience. The Buddhist scriptures mention five other sub-realms of being, namely, *sura-loka*, *asura-loka*, animal-realm (*paśu-loka*), *preta-loka* and *naraka-loka* in addition to human-realm (*nara-loka*). These correspond to the aggravated levels of pride, jealousy, bewilderment, attachment and hatred respectively. These depict the many different ways in which a person (a sentient being[18]) can bring-forth and relate to the world. These realms are experiences of the same sphere of reality with differing *vāsanas* and karmic tendencies of the beings.

The *ālaya* provides an ever-changing, but stable context for a person to relate to the world consistently in one of these realms. The defiled mentality and functional consciousnesses work in tandem with *ālaya-vijñāna* to provide this stability,

by concretizing the sphere of experience. This stability is disturbed during death. The structure of *ālaya* and the eight collections dissolves during the process of dying, resulting in the dissolution of the structure of experience. The experiential states in the intermediate state between death and rebirth are narrated by Guru Padmasambhava (Trans. 1975). This corresponds to the process of the restructuring of the *ālaya* and the eight collections; and thus the emergence of a new structure of experience for the continuum of the person. The defiled mentality, with its clinging to the idea of self, plays a vital role in the process of rebirth. The defiled mentality undergoes a struggle to re-establish one's identity. This struggle leads to an identification of the self with certain experiences that arise in the person's continuum. This leads to the process of concretization and re-stabilization of the *ālaya* centred around such experiences. This centring is usually by habitual identification, rather than through any conscious choice. This process has a striking similarity in its dynamics with the concept of attractors in the theory of non-linear dynamics.

Psychology of transformation

The models of personality introduced above, can be applied in studying the psychology of transformation. Distinctions between the subtler experiential states of *samādhi*, liberation (*vimukti*), stages on the path to full awakening (*saṃbodhi*) etc., can be understood with the help of these models. Buddhism does not consider *samādhi* states as liberation from suffering, because these do not result in the irreversible transformation of the basis of suffering. Such a transformation is possible only through cultivating insight (*prajñā*) about the actual mode of existence of a person.

A person accesses the states of meditative absorption (*samādhi*) through subduing the five afflictions and cultivating the mental episodes of one-pointed concentration (*ekāgratā*). Eight major levels of *samādhi* states are identified, of which the first four are categorized as form-realm and the remaining as formless-realm. The *Surangama-samādhi-sūtra* is one of the sources with detailed descriptions of these realms and their sub-realms (*Surangama-samādhi-sūtra,* 2003). In summary, the form-realm presents the experience of vivid appearances of ephemeral forms with reducing levels of grasping, and an absence of explicit suffering.[19] *Ālaya-vijñāna* becomes the dominant level of consciousness as the person progresses through various form-realms. The functional consciousnesses and the *ālaya* are secondary.

In the formless-realm states, *ālaya-vijñāna* and the functional consciousnesses tend to become increasingly dormant and *ālaya* dominates. In these states, distinctions and comprehension weaken. The experiences are like a vast undifferentiated space (*ākāśa-ananta-āyatana*), like a vast consciousnesses devoid of even the objective perception of space (*vijñāna-ananta-āyatana*), a perception of the lack of any perceivable phenomena (*akincana-āyatana*) and a complete subsiding of consciousness as 'neither perception, nor non-perception' (*naiva-saṃjñā na-asaṃjña-āyatanam*). In the last of the above, *ālaya-vijñāna* and the functional consciousnesses are completely dormant, while the person continues with all the *vāsana* and karmic

tendencies dormant and intact in the *ālaya*. In Buddhism, the formless states are not regarded as desired results of spiritual practice. They lack both the omniscient quality of the enlightened state and the limited distinctions of ordinary beings. As the functional consciousnesses that help in getting down to specific aspects are dormant, cultivating insight is difficult in formless realm.

One who is liberated from suffering is called an Arhat. One progresses to the state of Arhat through the union of insight meditation (*vipaśyana*) and calm-abiding (*samatā*), by cultivating wisdom regarding the true nature of a person—*anātma*. An Arhat's *ālaya-vijñāna* undergoes a level of irreversible transformation that no more supports the sprouting of defiled mentality (*kḷṣṭa-manas*). The accomplishment is irreversible, since a mental continuum ripened with wisdom does not provide a suitable condition for the arousal of ignorance (*avidyā*). In the light of wisdom of *anātma*, an Arhat is no more pushed around by the winds of karma. This is to be contrasted with the reminiscent effect of *samādhi* that continues after meditation, but fades away over time. Though an Arhat has achieved freedom from the veil of afflictions (*kleśāvaraṇa*), the veil of knowables (*jñeyāvaraṇa*) is still present. Thus an Arhat's sphere of experience is still limited.

A person (*Bodhisattva*) on the path to complete awakening (*saṃbodhi*) needs to remove the veil of knowables in addition to veil of afflictions. Removal of all the stains of *vāsana* is essential for this. This can be achieved only through working with the projections of functional consciousness to actively modify *vāsana*. Thus the path of progress of a Bodhisattva is different from that of an Arhat. It requires compassionate engagement (*upāya*) with the world along with insight (*prajñā*) into the true nature of all phenomena. These two necessarily need to go hand-in-hand, since the realization of subtler levels of interdependence and enriched levels of compassion through post-meditational periods, and the realization of deeper levels of emptiness through meditation, support each other. Through gradual coalescing of meditative and post-meditative experiences, one completely wipes out stains of *vāsana*. This results in the irreversible abandonment of *ālaya* that structures experiences through past habits, and in a direct experience of truth 'as it is'. Then there is wisdom co-emergent with every sprout of experience. The eight-fold collection of the ordinary personality transforms into the pristine wisdom that is ever-fresh. Detailed descriptions of the stages on the path to liberation and complete awakening, and their relations with the models of personality, as described above, can be found in scriptures such as the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*.

Going beyond 'confusion'

The absence of recognition of the truth 'as it is', leads to the 'confusion' (*bhrānti*—the cognitive error) of seeing truth from a perspective—distorting and concretizing certain aspects, failing to see the rest, imputing layers of concepts, etc. The colouring of the sphere of experience is the first level of embodiment or grounding of awareness—in the form of *ālaya*. This is also the beginning of 'confusion'. The

grounded perspective of a person does not remain the same over time. It undergoes change within a limited scope within a life-span, and restructures significantly between death and rebirth. The suffering and limited pleasures one undergoes are the result of this confusion. Confusion is the only basis for suffering. However, the ultimate nature of confusion is none other than that of awareness. It is merely a distortion of awareness resulting from the lack of recognition of the truth 'as it is'.

When one progresses in the path by working to eliminate the veils (*kleśāvaraṇa* and *jñeyāvaraṇa*), one recognizes the true nature of reality. *Ālaya* loses its support through this recognition (because *avidyā* is its necessary support). Aspects of pristine wisdom (*jñāna*) shine forth after this recognition. In the absence of conditioning through past experiences in the form of *vāsana* and karmic tendencies, this pristine wisdom is an ever-fresh awareness comprehending truth 'as it is'. There is nothing essentially pure and impure, except for confused perspectives making such distinctions through exaggerations. The five aggregates, the five root afflictions and the eight-fold collection are distorted perspectives to pristine wisdom. The five inseparable aspects of pristine wisdom are:

1. Pristine wisdom of discrimination (*pratyavekṣaṇa jñāna*),
2. Pristine wisdom that is mirror-like (*ādarśa jñāna*),
3. Pristine wisdom of equality (*samatā jñāna*),
4. Pristine wisdom of all-accomplishment (*kṛtyānuṣṭhāna jñāna*), and
5. Pristine wisdom of the void sphere of reality (*dharmadhātu jñāna*).

The 'pristine wisdom of discrimination' differentiates and understands all details of phenomena. It engages with the entire sphere of experience to distinguish details. It is the capability behind the aggregate of perception. In the absence of the confusion of grounded perspectives, the power of attachment is transformed into its purified form as correct discernment, through unbiased engagement without exclusions and exaggerations. Thus the aggregate of imputed perceptions dissolves in this pristine wisdom.

The 'pristine wisdom that is mirror-like' reflects the void sphere of reality (*dharmadhātu*) in its fullness, without getting perturbed into disturbing emotional states (through karmic tendencies) and habitual colouring (through *vāsana*). This is the aspect of unwavering clarity. This is the capability behind the aggregate of *vijñāna*. The grounded context that formulates *vijñāna* (qualified knowing) dissolves by the recognition free from confusion. The power that drives the affliction of hatred is transformed into its purified form as the power for unperturbed clear experience.

The 'pristine wisdom of equality' is the wisdom sensing the happiness and suffering of all beings with one-taste, transcending beyond the ego-centric feelings of suffering and limited pleasures. Due to the absence of confused identities with suffering and pleasure, this leads to an even-minded quality of compassionate all-rounded enrichment. The aggregate of feeling dissolves into the realization of this pristine wisdom. The power that drives the affliction of pride (*māna*), and the ego-clinging nature of enriching one's happiness, is transformed into an all-enriching attitude.

The 'pristine wisdom of all-accomplishment' is the creative wisdom of a fully awakened being. It represents the power for spontaneous accomplishments (*anabhoga*) instead of being bound to karma driven actions. With the dawn of recognition, the aggregate of formation dissolves into this naturally accomplishing wisdom. The power that drives the afflictions of jealousy and competitiveness is released from its confused journey of aggression into that of effortless accomplishment.

The 'pristine wisdom of the void sphere of reality' is the experience of truth 'as it is'. The confused perspectives lead from this wisdom to concretized aspects as the aggregate of form. It is the same power of this wisdom that drives the affliction of bewilderment, when one diverts from the deeper investigation of the nature of truth, into confused identification with appearances. The comprehension of certain unchanging patterns within the ever-changing flux of appearances results in seemingly permanent forms. If one perfectly transcends bewilderment with insight (*prajñā*) and one-pointed concentration, one cuts through all appearances into the true nature of reality.

Similarly, the eight-fold collection of *ālaya-vijñāna*, and so forth, are confused presentations of pristine wisdom. The sense consciousnesses with its power to relate to the world through karma-driven projections are nothing but the power of the pristine wisdom of all-accomplishment, applied within the limited perspective of grounded cognition. The mental consciousness, with its power to conceptually analyse its object, is the distortion of the pristine wisdom of discrimination operating within the constraints of grounded perspectives. The defiled mentality with its subjective formulations is the confused display of the power behind the pristine wisdom of equality, trying to set a limited scope for moving from suffering to happiness. The *ālaya-vijñāna* is the confused display of luminous clarity of the mirror-like pristine wisdom, being coloured and perturbed by experiences of the past. The *ālaya* itself is the confused colouring of the pristine wisdom of the void sphere of reality, displaying forth as the limited sphere of experience.

On recognizing the true nature, confusion ceases. Various dimensions of awareness-potentials and capabilities are amalgamated into the ever fresh display of pristine wisdom of complete awakening. Nothing is abandoned—neither the experience of distinctions, nor the experience of wholeness; neither the experience of sensation, nor the creative potential of action. All these are coalesced into inseparable aspects of omniscient wisdom in the void sphere of reality. Going beyond 'confusion' (*bhrānti*), through developing the irreversible foundation of insight (*prajñā*), one transcends beyond the ordinary to this perfect and completely awakened state.

Conclusion

The three models presented above cover different ways of analyzing personality—in terms of the categories of experiences, the dynamics of mental continuum, and the context and structure of experiences. The five dimensions of capabilities show how all these models are connected together, and how the same faculties

can manifest either as the distorted demonstrations of afflictions or as the purified presence of pristine wisdom. It reveals the ineffable potential pent up in every being, which can be unleashed to its spontaneous perfection by developing recognition. This recognition has to be cultivated through the focused application of method (*upāya*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) in its initial stages, and through spontaneous perfection of the inseparability of method and wisdom in its advanced stages. Buddhist psychology primarily addresses how to progress systematically from the ordinary state of being into the state of perfect recognition.

Elements from Buddhist psychology can also be studied and utilized for application in other facets of psychology. The network model of mental continuum and the view of *Madhyamaka* have already found their places in the research topics of psychology and cognitive science. The rest of the models remain largely untapped. The model of eight-fold collection presents a good psychological description of the process of sleeping, dreaming and dying. This can potentially be studied in correlation with scientific observations. This model also provides a suitable framework to study the psychology of transformation, and to map and correlate the experiences of practitioners from various spiritual traditions. The five dimensions of capability can provide a useful template for studying psychological afflictions in the scientific context. This would help in root-cause analysis of various psychological disorders, and in integrating that knowledge for the holistic transformation of a person.

Endnotes

1 The three scopes of motivation for Buddhist practice were pointed out by the sage and scholar Atīsa Dīpānkara Srijñāna in 'The Lamp to the Path to Enlightenment' (*Bodhipatha-pradīpa*). These include the lower motivation of good rebirths (that of relatively low levels of suffering), the middle motivation of liberation from cyclical existence and the higher motivation of complete and perfect awakening as an omniscient knower.

2 The Buddhist term *nirvāṇa* is used in two contexts. Its lower scope is freedom from suffering (*vimukti*) and the higher is perfect and complete awakening (*saṃbodhi*). Commonality is that both of these states are free from *saṃsāra*.

3 The distortions that arise when experiencing the truth from various frames of reference may be termed in modern terms as 'cognitive errors'. This concept is further explored in later sections of this chapter in relation to terms like obscuration to omniscience (*jñeyāvaraṇa*) and confusion.

4 The five aspects of pristine wisdom are mentioned by the Buddha in *kāyatraya-avatāra-sūtra*. The theme of these five aspects is detailed out further in *vajrayāna* teachings.

5 *Mahāyāna* (higher vehicle) refers to schools that focus on the higher scope of motivation—that of *saṃbodhi*. Many schools (like *Theravāda*) that primarily focus on the middle scope of lower *nirvāṇa*—that of *vimukti*—accepts only the first turning sutras.

6 *Prajna-pāramita* tradition refers to the scholastic tradition followed in the ancient universities of India like Nalanda, Vikramaśila and Odanḍapuri. This is also the tradition followed by Tibetan Buddhism. *Vajrayāna*, the tantric tradition of Buddhism is regarded to be part of this.

7 The phrase 'continuum (*santāna*) of a person' is used in Buddhism to refer to the person as an ever-changing stream of various aggregates. It also makes it explicit that person does not refer to a monolithic entity. A related term is mental continuum (*citta-santāna*) that refers to mind as an ever-changing stream of various mental episodes.

8 The Sanskrit word used for person is *pudgala*, meaning embodied being. In the Buddhist context, the discussions on psychological models apply not only to human beings, but also to all other sentient beings. Also see endnote 18.

9 *Abhidharma-kośa* (Treasury of higher knowledge) is an ancient text by the Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu detailing Buddhist teachings as understood by the *Sarvāstivādin* school of Sanskrit *Hinayāna* tradition.

10 *Abhidharma-samuccaya* (Compendium of higher knowledge) is an ancient text by the Buddhist yogi-scholar Asanga detailing *Abhidharma* teachings from a *Yogācāra* perspective.

11 *Manas* is introduced and discussed in the section, 'Model 3: The eight-fold collection'.

12 Asanga in his treatise named *Bodhisatva-bhūmi* (part of *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*) states 'the appearance of objects is known as *vijñāna*' and 'the first conceptualization of these [appearances] is known as *citta*'. The conceptualization (*vikalpa*) in this context relates to the basic imputation of the object of cognition through *vāsana* as explained later in this chapter in connection with emptiness and the context of experience. This is not the grosser conceptualization that forms various additional ideas about the object through the aggregate of formation.

13 This is clarified in the third turning through the phrase '*svacitta-dṛśya-vikalpa*' (conceptualized appearances to the mind) in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*. It does not mean that there is no basis to appearances other than mind. Such an interpretation leads to the mistaken view of the third turning as subjective idealism. It rather means, whatever 'appears" to mind is not truly existent outside mind. The truth 'as it is' that is beyond all conceptual elaboration is apprehended through limitations of *citta* as something else.

14 It may be noted that the three aggregates presenting subjective aspects, viz., feeling, perception and formations contribute to the mental episodes.

15 In this context, *samādhi* does not refer to its usual meaning associated with meditative absorption. It refers to the basic stability in mental engagement needed for ascertaining the qualities of an object correctly.

16 Insight meditation (*vipaṣyāna*) is an integral part of Buddhist practice along with calm-abiding meditation (*śamata*).

17 The non-linear dynamics of a collection of similar karmic tendencies leading a person into pleasurable and painful states of experience are termed *puṅya* and *pāpa*. Such collections can build up exponentially due to mutual reinforcement and due to the fuel that the mind-stream provides to the tendencies continuously.

18 Sentient being refers to a being with mind that can sense suffering and happiness. Also see endnote 8.

19 The Buddha pointed out that all-pervasive suffering of construction (*saṃskāra-dukhata*) is present even in the realms of form and formless experiences even though the explicit and gross suffering is absent. This is because these realms of experiences are constructed through many conditions. The struggle for construction is an implicit suffering that one may remain unaware of. In constructed states, one has to constantly struggle to generate supporting conditions. Or else, the state fades away upon exhaustion of supporting conditions like meritorious karma (as like a lamp going off on exhausting oil).

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9

Integral Psychology: A new science of self, personality, and psychology

Suneet Varma

This chapter outlines a theory of personality based on Sri Aurobindo's conceptualization of the human being. Starting with the basic notion of self and personhood in contemporary academic psychology, largely located in the lower levels of psychological functioning, the field of Transpersonal Psychology is used as a stepping stone to access the higher reaches of humanity. A brief outline of the Advaita Vedāntic perspective on personality then paves the way for Sri Aurobindo's neo-Vedāntic depiction of the person. The contribution of the integral approach to the transformation of emotions, and its role in psychotherapy is then outlined. It is the author's contention that Sri Aurobindo's system contains a comprehensive framework of psychology, which allows for both Western as well as Indian conceptualization of the psyche and provides a synthesis, which is more than a mere sum of parts, giving a vision for an optimistic and glorious future of humankind, paving the way for divine life to manifest upon earth.

Introduction

Over the last ten years, I have increasingly been exposed to the writings of Sri Aurobindo, which seem to synthesize the best of what the Western as well as the Indian traditions have to offer by depicting existence from a consciousness perspective within an evolutionary framework. It is in the works of Sri Aurobindo that I get satisfactory answers to some of the most profound questions, which have haunted me for over two decades. The focus in this account is conceptualizations of the person, that is, personality in psychology, and how a deeper understanding of the psyche and its workings provides the key to human unity and world peace. Being situated in academic psychology, I delineate those perspectives in the mainstream of the discipline which demonstrate clear links with the larger Indian perspective and to which I have personally been able to relate to. This includes Psychoanalysis, Behaviourism, Humanistic Psychology, and finally Transpersonal Psychology, which is used as a stepping stone towards the higher reaches of the

Indian perspective, which—in my judgement—finds complete and perfected form within the framework outlined by Sri Aurobindo.

Western perspectives

In the Western intellectual/philosophical tradition, the term person refers to human beings as entities who have certain rights and duties, whereas the term personality refers to individuality. Both meanings derive etymologically from the Latin *persona* denoting mask, and thus refer to outer appearance and behaviour only. 'Self' and 'ego' are two other terms, more or less equivalent, referring to a particular person distinct from others. In the Indian context, the nature of the self, and the nature of reality as a whole are the two central topics of enquiry in the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣadic* sages conceived of an ultimate principle of reality, or existence itself, and called it *Brahman*. A major conclusion of their enquiry is that the Self is identical with *Brahman*.

I came to academic psychology to understand aspects of my self as well as that of the larger reality, in relation to problems encountered in my life. Now this goal is closer to the *Upaniṣadic* approach, but somewhat distant from the concerns of most of the conceptualizations available in the exclusively Western viewpoints in psychology. But it was much later that I became aware of the Indian perspective. The first major viewpoint on psyche and the nature of the person that I was exposed to was Psychoanalysis, the framework of Sigmund Freud. Freud pointed out—based on his observations of mentally disturbed persons who came to him for help—that our normal waking consciousness, termed as 'ego', is only a small part of the larger psychological reality and was but a 'tip of the iceberg' of the deeper aspects of consciousness which were hidden from our awareness. The hidden part he referred to as the unconscious, which comprised instinctual energies inherited from our evolutionary past, including our animal heritage. The two instincts which Freud largely focused on were those supporting sexuality and aggression, both of which had a survival function. The instincts resided in the domain called the *id*. As a human infant developed over time, she was socialized to channelize her instinctual impulses in socially accepted ways. The domain of the societal codes of conduct was the 'super-ego'. Thus the major role of the personality or ego was to allow, under close supervision, the expression of the *id* impulses in ways which did not violate the rules of the super-ego. Growth and maturity in the Freudian system thus consisted in the emergence of a strong ego, which worked towards striking a balance between the contrary demands of the *id* on the one hand, and the super-ego on the other; and going by Freud's final analysis after he had witnessed the two world wars, it was a losing battle—for the dark forces residing in the unconscious ultimately succeeded in having their way. Freud was pessimistic about the future of humankind.

When I first encountered Psychoanalysis, I found it extremely difficult to locate my own existence, my experience, in this framework. Sexuality and aggression played a minimal role in my life; nor did social rules pose much of an obstacle for

me. The experiences which I cherished such as happiness, harmony, peace, love—none of these were the goals of Psychoanalysis; nor did the quest for the ultimate meaning of existence have any place in Freud's system. Michel Foucault (1988, p. 18) referred to practices aiming at improving the human condition, resulting in growth as 'technologies of the self' which 'permits individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality'. I find the description given by Foucault a useful criteria for assessing the effectiveness of different systems of psychology; and I am unable to rate Psychoanalysis as effective in this regard.

The second major system of psychology that I was exposed to was Behaviourism. The behaviourists assumed that all aspects of human functioning can be accounted for via the mechanism of learning, based on an analysis of a person's interactions with the external environment; and that the human organism to begin with is a *tabula rasa*—a blank slate upon which anything can be written, in the form of stimuli impinging from the outside. The behaviourists thus sought laws of learning valid for at least all mammals, and assumed the extension of animal findings to human psychology. J. B. Watson stood at the head of this tradition and his conception of psychology is clearly stated in his 1913 paper, 'Psychology as a behaviorist views it':

> Psychology as a behaviorist views it is a purely objective branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior…. The behaviorist in his efforts to get a unitary scheme of animal response recognizes no dividing line between man and brute. (Leahey, 1991, p. 190)

It was Watson's ambition to raise the status of psychology to that of an objective natural science. To do so, he adhered as closely as possible to the methodology and principles of Newtonian mechanics, the eminent example of scientific rigour and objectivity. To subject psychological experiments to the criteria used in physics required that psychologists focus exclusively on phenomena that can be registered and described objectively by independent observers. Thus in the behaviourist view, living organisms were complex machines reacting to external stimuli, and this stimulus-response (S-R) mechanism was of course modelled after Newtonian physics. It implied a rigorous causal relation that would enable psychologists to predict the response for a given stimulus, and conversely to specify the stimulus for a given response. A logical consequence of the S-R model was a tendency to look for the determinants of psychological phenomena in the external world rather than within the organism.

It appears to me that Behaviourism can account for many of my habits and other superficial characteristics of my personality which have obviously been learnt, but it tells me little about the nature of self, what it means to be a person, leave alone the complex issues of growth, fulfilment, happiness, love or the purpose of existence. The strength of Behaviourism lies in its description of the

process of how the immediate external environment shapes certain bodily aspects of behaviour, but not much more than that. Of course, it was a system of knowledge generated by strict adherence to a rigorous 'scientific' procedure which relied exclusively on tangible observables, which ended up ignoring significant aspects of human existence located in lived experience within conscious awareness—in fact, conscious awareness finds no place in the behaviourist scheme of things. In terms of 'technologies of self', the behaviourists have nothing to offer.

So far, in my journey on the pathways outlined in academic psychology, I found no clue as to who I really was, why I had come into existence and what I was to do with my life. The third major system I was exposed to, one which I found addressing some of my concerns and also optimistic in outlook, was that of Humanistic Psychology and the major proponents of this school of thought were Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. These psychologists were critical of the limited views of human nature offered by Psychoanalysis and Behaviourism, where we are seen, in the case of the former as victims of unconscious forces, and in the latter as passive responders to external stimuli. While most humanists acknowledge the influence of external stimuli and instincts, they do not believe that human beings are unchangeable victims of these forces. We can and must rise above our past, our lower unconscious nature, the features of our environment, and develop and grow beyond these potentially inhibiting forces. The humanist psychologists' image of human nature is optimistic and hopeful for they believe in our capacity for expanding, enriching, developing, and fulfilling ourselves to become all that we are capable of becoming.

The humanists were thus the first within academic psychology to point to our capacity for growth which, as Rogers emphasized, is the urge which is evident in all organic and human life—to expand, extend, become autonomous, develop, mature—the tendency to express and activate all the capacities of the organism or the self. As a plant attempts to become a healthy plant, as a seed contains within it the drive to become a tree, so a person is impelled to become a whole, complete and self-actualized person. Now this formulation of a person was helpful for me, personally, for it outlined a positive goal of existence—growth. But at the same time it was incomplete for it did not exactly tell me what the end point of growth was, nor did it outline any precise or systematic 'technology of the self' to help me in transforming myself. In the humanist view, my existence was to be understood on my own terms, within my own narrow individual experience. There was no mention in this system of my connection with other aspects of the world and the cosmos at large; and thus there was no way of addressing who or what I ultimately am, and for what purpose I have come into existence.

It was only in Transpersonal Psychology that I got a glimpse of what I was searching for. Transpersonal Psychology is concerned with the study of humanity's highest potential and with the recognition, understanding and realization of unitive, spiritual and transcendental experiences. Transpersonal experiences refer to experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (*trans*) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche

and the cosmos. The underlying concept of human nature in Transpersonal Psychology is not a new one. It has always existed in human culture, and includes the following four basic premises (Fadiman & Frager, 2002):

- There is a transcendent reality or unity that binds together all (apparently separate) phenomena.
- The ego or individual self is but a reflection of a greater, transpersonal Self or oneness. We come from and are grounded in that Self. However, we have become estranged from our origins and we need to return to them in order to become fully healthy and whole human beings.
- The fact that individuals can directly experience this reality or greater Self is at the core of the spiritual dimension of life.
- The experience involves a qualitative shift in experiencing oneself and the larger world. It is a powerful, self-validating experience.

Transpersonal growth as the transformation of human consciousness has been described with the help of various metaphors such as the transforming of the caterpillar into a butterfly; awakening from a dream to reality; moving from captivity to liberation; going from darkness to light; being purified by inner fire; going from fragmentation to wholeness; journeying to a place of vision and power; returning to the source; and dying and being reborn.

In summary, whereas Humanistic Psychology focuses on personal growth and full development of the personality, the transpersonal approach focuses on expansion of the boundaries of the self, which, as we shall see shortly, is the central concern in the Indian traditions on psychological functioning and the nature of self. Angyal describes each of these viewpoints:

> Viewed from one of these vantage points (the full development of personality) the human being seems to be striving basically to assert and to expand his self-determination. He is an autonomous being, a self-growing entity that asserts itself actively instead of reacting passively like a physical body to the impacts of the surrounding world.... This tendency—which I have termed "the trend towards increased autonomy"—expresses itself in spontaneity, self-assertiveness, striving for freedom and mastery.
>
> Seen from another vantage point, human life reveals a very different pattern from the one described above. From this point of view the person appears to seek a place for himself in a larger unit of which he strives to become a part... he seems rather to surrender himself willingly to seek a home for himself and to become an organic part of something that he conceives as greater than himself. (Fadiman & Frager, 1984, p. 481)

For the very first time I became aware of a system within academic psychology, though a weak voice located at the fringe of the discipline, which addressed concerns very central and pertinent to questions for which I sought answers. It appeared that if I were to understand my essential nature, I would need to know more about the transcendental unity that binds together all, of which my individual self is a part. I also wished to know more about this for if I had really

become separated from my origins, it was essential that I became acquainted with the different facets of this larger canvas of existence. Thus began my exploration of Indian perspectives on existence and psychological functioning.

Indian perspectives

As noted earlier, the two major concerns in the ancient *Upaniṣads* were—the nature of the self, and the nature of reality as a whole. In a story narrated in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, the famous dialogue between Naciketas and Yama reveals certain essential aspects of the nature of Self in the *Upaniṣadic* perspective, which is, of course, transcendental in nature. The story (based on the account given by Paranjpe, 1998) goes as follows: Naciketas, a boy in his teens, is in conversation with Yama, the gatekeeper of heaven and hell. Naciketas finds himself at Yama's gate because his father was renouncing his worldy possessions and the puzzled Naciketas asked his father if he would also give away his son. Angered by his son's query, the angry father in a fit of rage replied in the affirmative. Thus Naciketas finds himself at Yama's gate but cannot enter as Yama is away to earth on a routine assignment of picking up ripe souls.

When Yama returns, he finds Naciketas waiting at his doorstep for the last three days, and thus feels embarrassed that he had been unable to provide hospitality to him. As compensation, Yama tells Naciketas that he may ask for any three wishes, which would be granted to Naciketas. The boy first asks for complete fulfilment of his father's wishes and that he be reunited with a happy father. Naciketas second wish was that he may secure a place in heaven, based on the esoteric knowledge of the heavenly fire. The first two wishes granted, for his third wish Naciketas asks Yama to reveal to him the knowledge of that which exists beyond life and death. Yama, who had unhesitatingly granted the first two wishes, was most reluctant to grant Naciketas this third and final wish. Instead, he attempts to talk the boy into accepting all sorts of worldly as well as heavenly pleasures and riches. Despite Yama's best efforts, Naciketas refuses to change his last wish and shows no interest in these pleasures and riches, as he knows them to be ephemeral.

Yama is deeply impressed with Naciketas' perseverance, and his ability to distinguish between that which is merely pleasurable (*preyas*) with that which is the Good (*śreyas*); and the fact that the boy opted for the latter. Yama finally agrees to teach Naciketas about the true nature of the Self, the essence in persons that is changeless. The Self can neither be divided nor destroyed, and it is by gaining the knowledge of the Self that one becomes immortal.

> The Knowledge (*vidyā*) of the eternal principle (*akṣara*) is quite different from the knowledge of changeable (*kṣara*) objects in the world. One cannot obtain the knowledge by reaching out to objects in the world; Knowledge of the Self is hidden deep within the innermost self, in the very "heart" of the person. It lies beyond the senses, the mind, and the intellect; its essence cannot be seen with the eyes or captured by the mind or by words, for the Self is

> not observable and locatable within physical bodies; it is disembodied, and hence everywhere like space. Toward the end of the text, the *Kaṭha* Upaniṣad (6.10–11) explains that the Self is experienced when, through the practice of Yoga, the five senses are held back, the mind is undistracted, and the intellect is stabilized. (Paranjpe, 1998, p. 118)

From the above passage, it is quite clear that the *Upaniṣadic* view describes the true Self as transcendental and this constitutes our essential nature underlying all forms. The true Self can be experienced only upon disengagement from the outer world, which includes our thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations. In other words, we have first to go beyond the boundaries of the narrow ego or the limited self before we can begin to move in the direction of realizing the true Self. Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedāntic system, derived from the *Upaniṣads* (Paranjpe, 1998), emphasizes that there is one single principle that accounts for the ultimate reality—Brahman–characterized by the trilogy of terms—Being, Consciousness and Bliss (*sat, cit, ānanda*). The nature of Brahman is described with the help of the following adjectives—eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), sentient (*buddha*), ever released or emancipated (*mukta*), existent (*satya*), subtle (*sūkṣma*), all-pervasive or ubiquitous (*vibhū*) and 'without a second' or nondual (*advitīya*).

Brahma pervades the entire world and extends even beyond it, and is the transcendent and immanent principle of the entire universe. The true Self is identical with *Brahman*; but in our mundane existence appears to be different, because of the state of ignorance which we are normally trapped in. As long as we remain within the clutches of this distorted view of self and reality, we fail to see the world as it really is. Realization of our true and essential nature which is Self, thus amounts to a union or merging with our original and actual form, from which we find ourselves separated. All suffering arises because we identify and become attached with external transitory aspects of existence which are impermanent and fail to grasp and apprehend that which is permanent, which is our true Self, one with the Cosmos. Thus all attempts to realize or merge with our true Self become a form of *yoga*, in its most general sense. The Advaita Vedāntic system is one amongst many paths—for example, the formal schools of *yoga* (*bhakti*, *jñāna*, *karma*), the Buddhist approach, to name the major—which aim at guiding us in the realization of our true nature and leading us to a greater knowledge, bliss, love, and ultimately a state of oneness with the entirety of existence.

These Indian approaches to *yoga* (in the generic sense), all fall into the category of 'technologies of the self' and are clearly systems which help us in generating insights about our psyche and its relation with existence in general, and through the adoption of various practices lead to a transformation in the experience of our very being. We would then find ourselves aware of higher states of consciousness, be able to elevate ourselves to these higher states at will and at the same time become more effective in those aspects of the out-worldly affairs we choose to engage with and be able to experience far greater levels of joy and love, to mention some of the positive effects attained in the process of *yoga*. Here, I outline the essential aspects of the Advaita Vedāntic perspective on personality. The Advaita system is

generally considered to be the one most representative interpretation of the Indian view on reality and existence, and shares many elements in common with most other schools.

Advaita Vedāntic model of personality

The Advaita Vedāntic position on personhood or who we really are, as outlined above, is aligned with the principle of *Brahman*. The core of each individual's being is one with *Brahman*, which is the eternal principle characterized by *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*. As we are caught up in ignorance (*avidyā*), we are oblivious of this greater truth. In Vedānta, the term *jīva* is used to designate a human being, though literally *jīva* refers to all living beings—the higher and the lower forms—where it is held that a *jīva* has to undergo a process of evolution through manifold life cycles before it takes birth in the form of a human being. The Vedāntic *jīva* (referring to the human form) has been described as a five-layered entity, one enveloping the other similar to the sheaths of an onion.

The outermost layer refers to the body and is termed as *annamaya koṣa*, which literally means 'cereal or food sheath'. The second inner layer bears the name *prāṇamaya koṣa* or 'sheath of vital breath' and refers to breathing as well as other processes of the body, which ensure the functioning of the various organs. The *manomaya koṣa* is the third inner sheath and refers to the processes of the senses and is also considered to be the basis of the ego in terms of 'me' or 'mine' awareness. The fourth inner layer is called the *vijñānamaya koṣa* and refers to the functioning of the intellect—thinking and reasoning, or in general the higher cognitive functions. The *ānandamaya koṣa* or 'bliss sheath" is the fifth and the innermost layer of the *jīva* and is thus the seat of the true Self, the *ātman*, identical with *Brahman*. Since the true Self or *Brahman* is at the core of each and every human being, blissfulness is therefore our essential nature. This state is infinitely more joyful than all the pleasures attainable through wealth and power put together.

Ordinarily, most of us are trapped in a state of ignorance based on a distorted notion of who we are and thus tend to suffer. The goal of Vedānta is the removal of this ignorance through a systematic procedure and restoration of our self-awareness to its original state of the true Self, one with *Brahman*, characterized by *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. Vedānta thus promises liberation (*mokṣa*) via the process of attaining self-knowledge and delivers us to a state, where we experience boundless joy devoid of any pain whatsoever. The reason why we suffer and remain in ignorance, unaware of our pure and essential state of blissfulness, is because of the superimposition of the fluctuating attributes of the ego (now happy then unhappy, perplexed or clear, etc.) onto the unchanging and blissful *ātman*. In a reverse manner, the ego which is forever fluctuating, derives a sense of selfsameness by erroneously attributing the *ātman's* permanence, onto itself. It is the mind or *antaḥkaraṇa* (inner instrument) which creates the properties of the ego (e.g. knowing, acting, and suffering). As Paranjpe (1998, pp. 170–171) notes,

> … it is the ego that doubts and determines, feels clear or confused, agitated or arrested, exhilarated or morose. Yet, such states are attributed to the Ātman, which transcends all such mutations. On the other hand, the fickle ego derives a sense of permanence and the inert body gains consciousness from the unchanging and conscious Ātman. Seen from the Advaita Vedāntic point of view, this is the most fundamental attributional error, whereby the true self is identified with the nonself and vice versa… such misconstrual constitutes the primeval illusion (*ādi māyā*) and is the prime cause of human suffering.… As soon as one discards the erroneous identification with the ever-changing states of the ego, the true nature of the self as Being, Consciousness, and Bliss shines forth, and one sidesteps and thereby "escapes" the miserable chains of action and its consequences.

In essence, the Advaita Vedāntic system aims at a total transformation of a person's life by strict adherence to a highly demanding programme of study which begins with the recognition of one's imperfections, moves through the process of the cultivation of dispassionateness aided by teachings and meditation, and culminates in self-realization. I have deliberately not detailed the 'technology' offered by the *Vedāntists* for realization of the true Self for that demands a lengthy explanation and discussion of the entire system. The objective in this chapter is to use the transpersonal Advaita Vedāntic notion of self and personhood as a means to introduce the Indian perspective, and then move on to a more detailed coverage of Sri Aurobindo's perspective on the same.

Sri Aurobindo's perspective

The following account of Sri Aurobindo's perspective is based on a preliminary understanding of his works. I consider it tentative, subject to revision and expansion upon greater exposure and comprehension of his Integral view of human existence. As was the concern in the *Upaniṣads*, Sri Aurobindo, too, has dealt with the nature of Self and nature of reality in general. Some three thousand years have elapsed since the *Upaniṣadic* times and both the context of human enquiry as well as the enquirer—the human entity—have changed since that time. Sri Aurobindo was well versed with the *Upaniṣadic* writings and the different systems of *yoga*. Based on his readings of the classical accounts, at the same time relying on his own personal insights, experiences and realizations, Sri Aurobindo outlined a new system of yoga—Integral Yoga—appropriate for the present as well as the future.

In this chapter, the focus is on self and personality which I now outline with reference to Sri Aurobindo's integral view. Before doing that, I first refer to Sri Aurobindo's larger vision of the future of humanity, within which we locate individual human existence. Sri Aurobindo held an evolutionary perspective but his focus was on the evolution of consciousness. Consciousness is the original, fundamental and essential stuff of the universe, which has at some point manifested itself in such a way that material form comes into existence. Now this is not a vague or difficult idea to grasp, because when we look at the fundamental building block of matter, the atom, we find that it in turn is composed of more

elementary particles, and as we go deeper in the analysis of the sub-parts we reach a point when the distinction between particle (matter) and energy (wave-form) breaks down. Finally we end up dealing with certain forces which are organized in a meaningful and lawful manner, a kind of Consciousness-Force. At this point we may once again refer to the origin—pure Consciousness which has the potential of acting out and manifesting in and as Form. Since the ancient times the term *puruṣa* has been used to denote pure Consciousness, which when acting out from its latency and manifesting in and as Form, is referred to as *prakṛti* or nature. Both are but two sides of the same coin, pure consciousness on one side and pure material form on the other. Thus Sri Aurobindo (1970a, pp. 236–237) notes:

> Consciousness is a fundamental thing, the fundamental thing in existence — it is the energy, the motion, the movement of consciousness that creates the universe and all that is in it — not only the macrocosm but the microcosm is nothing but consciousness arranging itself. For instance, when consciousness in its movement or rather a certain stress of movement forgets itself in the action it becomes an apparently "unconscious" energy; when it forgets itself in the form it becomes the electron, the atom, the material object. In reality it is still consciousness that works in the energy and determines the form and the evolution of form.

The story of existence goes something like this—in the beginning there was One which at some point manifested as the Many in terms of material forms. 'In the creating of the material world there was a plunge of this descending Consciousness into an apparent Inconscience and an emergence of it out of that Inconscience, degree by degree, until it recovers its highest spiritual and supramental summits and manifests their powers here in Matter' (1970a, pp. 1–2). Thus after involution, a process of evolution sets in and as the organization of material form evolves, life-forms emerge and their complexity increases over time. First plants, then the lower animals, then the higher, and finally the human being comes into existence. Simultaneously, consciousness, the inner dimension, is also evolving—in inanimate matter it is inconscient, not aware of itself, but is nevertheless present as Will or forces which sustain the existence of matter in its peculiar form. The electron revolves around the nucleus, but is not aware of itself. Consciousness evolves further in plant and then animal form, but remains hidden and not self-aware, as the driving force behind their acts for sustenance. In humans conscious awareness emerges to a far greater extent, as compared to the animal world. But humans are in the process of evolving further—consciousness grows to its higher forms and ultimately merges with the One or original state of *saccidānanda*. Again, Sri Aurobindo (1970a, pp. 43–44) notes:

> ... the Many exist in the One and by the One, the differences are variations in manifestation of that which is fundamentally ever the same.... The world is a manifestation of the Real and therefore is itself real. The reality is the infinite and eternal Divine, infinite and eternal Being, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. This Divine by his power has created the world or rather manifested it in his own infinite Being. But here in the material world or at its basis he has

> hidden himself in what seem to be his opposites, Non-Being, Inconscience and Insentience. This is what we nowadays call the Inconscient which seems to have created the material universe by its inconscient Energy, but this is only an appearance, for we find in the end that all the dispositions of the world can only have been arranged by the working of a supreme secret Intelligence. The Being which is hidden in what seems to be an inconscient void emerges in the world first in Matter, then in Life, then in Mind and finally as the Spirit. The apparently inconscient Energy which creates is in fact the Consciousness-Force of the Divine and its aspect of consciousness, secret in Matter, begins to emerge in Life, finds something more of itself in Mind and finds its true self in a spiritual consciousness and finally a supramental Consciousness through which we become aware of the Reality, enter into it and unite ourselves with it. This is what we call evolution which is an evolution of Consciousness and an evolution of the Spirit in things and only outwardly an evolution of species. Thus also, the delight of existence emerges from the original insentience, first in the contrary forms of pleasure and pain, and then has to find itself in the bliss of the Spirit or, as it is called in the Upanishads, the bliss of the Brahman.

In the earlier stages of human evolution, withdrawing from the higher planes of consciousness and returning to the lower, worldly planes involved a separation from the higher states, which could not be brought down into waking consciousness. But humanity has evolved further, and today, and more so in the near future it will be possible for a greater number of persons to ascend to higher levels and then upon descending retain something of the higher which would also transform individual functioning on the material plane. Disagreeing with the illusionist *Advaitic* perspective, Sri Aurobindo affirmed a realistic Advaita as noted in the preceding passage. He emphasized the equal importance and significance of the material worldly existence as of the spiritual, and noted that the time has come when the higher spiritual consciousness will inspire and guide our life in the earthly form and thus the possibility of 'The Life Divine'. In his vast writings, numerous illustrations have been given, which substantiate this view as well as evidences of all sorts have been provided that affirm the future vision of humankind. It is beyond the scope of the present writing to explore and outline this larger vision of Sri Aurobindo, and this brief introduction has been provided as a backdrop for the portrayal of personality and self.

Sri Aurobindo's portrayal of the human entity, as of existence in general, retains the *Vedāntic* flavour in his reference to the nature of the true Self, the demarcation of layers or sheaths that a person is made up of, and the possibility of liberation from ego-boundedness, that is, the state of ignorance. Sri Aurobindo's system refers to these categories, but in a somewhat different, more detailed and expanded form, and the goal and endpoint of liberation and transformation via the process of Integral Yoga is radically different and more difficult to attain. In addition, new categories and distinctions have been added, which make it possible to accommodate Western conceptualizations of psychological functioning and personality in his comprehensive Integral view. In other words, Sri Aurobindo's

perspective provides legitimate spaces for the insights gathered on human existence both from the West as well as the East, and allows us to integrate these and seems to go beyond what the previous systems offer in terms of growth and expansion which are possible for the human being.

Sri Aurobindo's model of personality

Sri Aurobindo's description of human functioning begins with the basis of everyday existence as experienced through the mind, feelings/desires and the body. We have thoughts related to the outside world (mental consciousness or *manomaya puruṣa*), positive and negative affect associated with objects and people in the outer world (vital consciousness or *prāṇamaya puruṣa*) as well as experiences of the body (physical consciousness or *annamaya puruṣa*) in its exchanges with the surrounding environment. 'The outer consciousness is that which usually expresses itself in ordinary life. It is the external mental, vital and physical' (1970a, p. 311). This aspect of personality is what Western psychology has largely been preoccupied with. Identification with only the outer aspects of our existence keeps us trapped in a state of ignorance because we remain unaware of that which supports the outer.

> The very first step in getting out of the ignorance is to accept the fact that this outer consciousness is not one's soul, not oneself, not the real person, but only a temporary formation on the surface for the purposes of the surface play. The soul, the person is within, not on the surface — the outer personality is the person only in the first sense of the Latin word *persona* which meant originally a mask. (1970a, pp. 304–305)

> There are always two different consciousnesses in the human being, one outward in which he ordinarily lives, the other inward and concealed of which he knows nothing. When one does *sadhana*, the inner consciousness begins to open and one is able to go inside and have all kinds of experiences there. As the *sadhana* progresses, one begins to live more and more in the inner being and the outer ... is felt by many as a dream or delusion, or else as something superficial and external. The inner consciousness begins to be a place of deep peace, light, happiness, love, closeness to the Divine or the presence of the Divine, the Mother. One is then aware of two consciousnesses, the inner one and the outer which has to be changed into its counterpart and instrument — that also must become full of peace, light, union with the Divine. (1970a, p. 307)

The inner being consists of the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical and serves as a connection between the psychic and the outer being. The outer being is capable of experiencing only a narrow range of stimuli and events related to stimuli impinging from the external world. But this is only a fraction of the experiences possible to the person—it is like the dial of a radio restricted to moving between a narrow range of frequencies. While we are asleep and dreaming, a different range of frequencies or realm of consciousness opens up—and we have access to an inner

world which is not dependent on stimuli from the external world. Dreams are but one example of the worlds existing apart from the external.

On each level—mental, vital and physical—there is a wider range of experience possible and vaster energies that can be tapped. The inner being is in contact with the universal planes of consciousness. The opening of the *cakras* in the process of the awakening of the *kuṇḍalinī* refers to the expansion of the boundaries of consciousness where a vast range of experience, which could not hitherto be accessed, becomes available to the outer being. Through the process of *sādhanā* the inner being awakens and gets activated and with the opening of the *cakras* the outer being also has access to the universal bands of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo (2005, pp. 442–443) has used the general term subliminal for all parts of the being, which are not on the waking surface, especially those referring to the workings of the inner being:

> Our subliminal self is not, like our surface physical being, an outcome of the energy of the Inconscient; it is a meeting-place of the consciousness that emerges from below by evolution and the consciousness that has descended from above for involution. There is in it an inner mind, an inner vital being of ourselves, an inner or subtle-physical being larger than our outer being and nature... There is here a consciousness which has a power of direct contact with the universal unlike the mostly indirect contacts which our surface being maintains with the universe through the sense-mind and the senses. There are here inner senses, a subliminal sight, touch, hearing; but these subtle senses are rather channels of the inner being's direct consciousness of things than its informants: the subliminal is not dependent on its senses for its knowledge, they only give a form to its direct experience of objects; they do not, so much as in waking mind, convey forms of objects for the mind's documentation or as the starting-point or basis for an indirect constructive experience. The subliminal has the right of entry into the mental and vital and subtle-physical planes of the universal consciousness, it is not confined to the material plane and the physical world; it possesses means of communication with the worlds of being which the descent towards involution created in its passage and with all corresponding planes or worlds that may have arisen or been constructed to serve the purpose of the re-ascent from Inconscience to Superconscience. It is into this large realm of interior existence that our mind and vital being retire when they withdraw from the surface activities whether by sleep or inward-drawn concentration or by the inner plunge of trance... The subliminal is ... the seer of inner things and of supraphysical experiences; the surface subconscious is only a transcriber. It is for this reason that the Upanishad describes the subliminal being as the Dream Self because it is normally in dreams, visions, absorbed states of inner experience that we enter into and are part of its experiences, — just as it describes the superconscient as the Sleep Self because normally all mental or sensory experiences cease when we enter this superconscience.

But the essence of human personality is not to be found even in the inner being. Behind the inner being is the inmost or psychic being which is the true centre of the person. The psychic is a portion of the Divine Self or *jīvātman* which manifests in the human being, but is in itself differentiated from the Divine Self. The soul or

psychic evolves from birth to birth and survives bodily death. Its evolution over the lifetimes (in human form) in which it manifests is toward the original Oneness or *Brahman*, in other words, a merging with the *jīvātman*. The psychic is a drop of the ocean of cosmic consciousness, which has got separated from its source and longs once again to return to it. This is possible only through evolution, via manifestation in human form, over the course of numerous lifetimes. The true purpose of human existence is a union with the Divine; and this is what the psychic always directs us toward. The psychic is that entity within us that awakens us toward the Good, the True, the Beautiful and Love. The existence of the psychic remains latent (outside of conscious awareness) within most of us, but is responsible for the experience of all that is sublime.

Over lifetimes the psychic evolves. At first we are not aware of its existence but it is the psychic which is secretly guiding the course of our lives and seeks to grow towards the Light. Situations which seem the biggest obstacles in our lives, and which we repeatedly confront, provide us with the lessons we most need to learn. A point comes when the psychic evolves sufficiently to make its presence felt in outward consciousness. This is accompanied by a change in the very 'stuff' of consciousness as experienced by the person. There is a sense of lightness, greater freedom from the external as reflected in the ease with which one is able to withdraw from the 'noise' in the outer world. This is accompanied by an experience of silence, peace, bliss, love—all spontaneous and not a response to anything outside of the person; though at first one may have difficulty in distinguishing between the true psychic response and distractions from the external. From this point onward, as the presence of the psychic is increasingly felt in the waking consciousness, it is possible and necessary through *sādhanā* to progress rapidly, aided by conscious and deliberate effort, towards spiritual awakening—entailing an ascent to the higher planes of consciousness (to be described in the next section). Thus Sri Aurobindo (1970a, pp. 301–302) notes:

> The being of man is composed of these elements — the psychic behind supporting all, the inner mental, vital and physical, and the outer, quite external nature of mind, life and body which is their instrument of expression. But above all is the central being (Jivatma) which uses them all for its manifestation: it is a portion of the Divine Self; but this reality of himself is hidden from the external man who replaces this inmost self and soul of him by the mental and vital ego. It is only those who have begun to know themselves that become aware of their true central being; but still it is always there standing behind the action of mind, life and body and is most directly represented by the psychic which is itself a spark of the Divine. It is by the growth of the psychic element in one's nature that one begins to come into conscious touch with one's central being above. When that happens and the central being uses a conscious will to control and organize the movements of the nature, it is then that one has a real, a spiritual as opposed to a partial and merely mental or moral self-mastery.

In another place, Sri Aurobindo (2005, p. 239) remarks:

> The psychic being can at first exercise only a concealed and partial and indirect action through the mind, the life and the body, since it is these parts of Nature that have to be developed as its instruments of self-expression, and it is long confined by their evolution. Missioned to lead man in the Ignorance towards the light of the Divine Consciousness, it takes the essence of all experience in the Ignorance to form a nucleus of soul-growth in the nature; the rest it turns into material for the future growth of the instruments which it has to use until they are ready to be a luminous instrumentation of the Divine. It is this secret psychic entity which is the true original Conscience in us deeper than the constructed and conventional conscience of the moralist, for it is this which points always towards Truth and Right and Beauty, towards Love and Harmony and all that is a divine possibility in us, and persists till these things become the major need of our nature. It is the psychic personality in us that flowers as the saint, the sage, the seer; when it reaches its full strength, it turns the being towards the Knowledge of Self and the Divine, towards the supreme Truth, the supreme Good, the supreme Beauty, Love and Bliss, the divine heights and largenesses, and opens us to the touch of spiritual sympathy, universality, oneness.

The gradients of consciousness: The lower and the higher spiritual planes

As noted above, the story of existence began with the involution of the supreme superconscience in and as gross matter. The lowest form of consciousness is that found in inanimate matter as involved in the workings of the atom with the electrons revolving around the nucleus, and is referred to as the inconscience. 'The Inconscience is an inverse reproduction of the supreme superconscience: it has the same absoluteness of being and automatic action, but in a vast involved trance; it is being lost in itself, plunged in its own abyss of infinity' (2005, p. 572). The next higher level of consciousness is the subconscient, '… that quite submerged part of our being in which there is no wakingly conscious and coherent thought, will or feeling or organized reaction, but which yet receives obscurely the impressions of all things and stores them up in itself and from it too all sorts of stimuli, of persistent habitual movements, crudely repeated or disguised in strange forms can surge up into dream or into the waking nature' (Sri Aurobindo, 1970a, p. 353). Further in the gradient of consciousness is the physical or the body consciousness which is present in animals as well. 'The body … is a creation of the Inconscient and itself inconscient or at least subconscient in parts of itself and much of its hidden action…' (Sri Aurobindo, 1989, p. 10).

Next in the ladder of consciousness is the vital, '… a thing of desires, impulses, force-pushes, emotions, sensations, seekings after life-fulfillment, possession and enjoyment; these are its functions and its nature; — it is that part of us which seeks after life and its movements for their own sake and it does not want to leave hold of them if they bring it suffering as well as or more than pleasure; it is even capable of luxuriating in tears and suffering as part of the drama of life' (Sri Aurobindo, 1970a, p. 323). The highest that is most commonly found in humans is the level of the mind. 'The "Mind" in the ordinary use of the word covers indiscriminately

the whole consciousness, for man is a mental being and mentalises everything; but in the language of this *yoga* the words "mind" and "mental" are used to connote specially the part of the nature which has to do with cognition and intelligence, with ideas, with mental or thought perceptions, the reactions of thought to things, with the truly mental movements and formations, mental vision and will, etc., that are part of his intelligence' (1970a, p. 320). For those human beings who have not gone deeper within themselves, mind and consciousness are synonymous. It is only when one becomes aware of oneself by a growth in consciousness, then one can see different degrees, kinds and powers of consciousness—mental, physical, psychic and spiritual.

With the surfacing of the psychic being, the higher ranges of consciousness above mind become accessible through *sādhanā*. These include—Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Overmind, and Supermind. Sri Aurobindo's depiction of psychological functioning and development thus refers to a two-tiered system—one horizontal, moving from the outer being to the inner and finally the inmost with the psychic at the centre; and the other vertical, involving ascension beyond mind to the higher reaches of consciousness and a subsequent descent of the higher consciousness which transforms the lower parts:

> There are in fact two systems simultaneously active in the organisation of the being and its parts: one is concentric, a series of rings or sheaths with the psychic at the centre; another is vertical, an ascension and descent, like a flight of steps, a series of superimposed planes with the supermind–overmind as the crucial nodus of the transition beyond the human into the Divine. For this transition, if it is to be at the same time a transformation, there is only one way, one path. First, there must be a conversion inwards, a going within to find the inmost psychic being and to bring it out to the front, disclosing at the same time the inner mind, inner vital, inner physical parts of the nature. Next, there must be an ascension, a series of conversions upwards and a turning down to convert the lower parts. When one has made the inward conversion, one psychicises the whole lower nature so as to make it ready for the divine change. Going upwards, one passes beyond the human mind and at each stage of the ascent, there is a conversion into a new consciousness and an infusion of this new consciousness into the whole of the nature. Thus rising beyond intellect through illumined higher mind to the intuitive consciousness, we begin to look at everything not from the intellect range or through intellect as an instrument, but from a greater intuitive height and through an intuitivised will, feeling, emotion, sensation and physical contact. So, proceeding from Intuition to a greater overmind height, there is a new conversion and we look at and experience everything from the overmind consciousness and through a mind, heart, vital and body surcharged with the overmind thought, sight, will, feeling, sensation, play of force and contact. But the last conversion is the supramental, for once there — once the nature is supramentalised, we are beyond the Ignorance and conversion of consciousness is no longer needed, though a farther divine progression, even an infinite development is still possible. (1970a, p. 251)

Sri Aurobindo has provided detailed descriptions of the characteristics of each of the higher stages of consciousness beyond mind. The first and most important point to note is that individuals are located at different levels and points in the gradient of consciousness. Some are totally caught up in the interchange with the external world and in that too there are differences. There are those who are more preoccupied with sensual needs and comforts of the body. Others may be caught up in the play of vital forces and concentrate more on gratifying their cravings and passions. Yet others may derive a sense of realness from the constructions of the mind—speculations and theorizations alike. All are still confined to the narrow range of the outer existence. A vaster universe unfolds when we become tuned to the wider range of energies and forces, which are only accessible when we turn inward.

The first step in accessing the inner mind is silencing of the outer—we have to get out of the feverish mental activity that we are used to. 'As a matter of fact, step by step we discover that that there is no necessity to think: something behind, or above, does all the work, with a precision and infallibility that grow as we get into the habit of referring to it; there is no necessity to remember, since the exact indication comes forth just when it is needed; no necessity to plan our action, since a secret spring sets it in motion without our willing it or thinking about it, and makes us do exactly what we have to do, with a wisdom and a foresight of which our [outer] mind, forever shortsighted, is quite incapable' (Satprem, 2000, p. 54). In the realm of the inner vital, a vast calmness exists and abundant energy is available to us. 'We enter a state of tranquil, spontaneous concentration, like the sea below the waves.… Depending on the degree of our development, all kinds of new capacities can emerge out of the vital stillness, but first of all, an inexhaustible source of energy [becomes accessible].... Then, in this stillness, another sign will be established permanently: the absence of suffering and a sort of unchanging joy (Satprem, 2000, p. 92).' Further, as we access the realm of the inner physical we discover powers of the body which we were earlier not aware of. In fact we are now in a position to experience a new kind of freedom in the body – even freedom from the narrow confines of the body. 'Once it has discovered the inexhaustible reservoir of the great Life-Force, the consciousness can now be independent of illness, independent of food and sleep.… When the current of consciousness-force in us has become sufficiently individualized, we notice that we can detach it not only from our senses and the objects of the senses, but also from the body' (Satprem, 2000, p. 122). As we move further inwards we have our first encounter with the psychic which is that entity within us that guides us toward what is right and good for us, contributes to our growth, and allows us to experience greater love and harmony in our lives.

Higher mind

With the flowering of the psychic we become aware of purpose of our existence—what we have to do with our lives. This simply means that we now have conscious awareness of activities and relationships we have to engage in and these are those

which take us in the direction of the Divine consciousness, the true Self. Ascension in consciousness now becomes possible and the higher planes gradually become more accessible. The experience of the higher mind includes the capacity to deal with a large number of ideas simultaneously. This is the mind of the philosopher and thinker at their highest. Sri Aurobindo (2005, p. 974) notes:

> Our first decisive step out of our human intelligence, our normal mentality, is an ascent into a higher Mind, a mind no longer of mingled light and obscurity or half-light, but a large clarity of the spirit. Its basic substance is a unitarian sense of being with a powerful multiple dynamisation capable of the formation of a multitude of aspects of knowledge, ways of action, forms and significances of becoming, of all of which there is a spontaneous inherent knowledge.

Illumined mind

When the higher mind learns to accept silence, it gains access to the domain of the illumined mind. In this realm of consciousness there is no longer a need to communicate with words. Instead, one comes in direct contact with the body/essence of truth and for this reason Sri Aurobindo (2005, pp. 980–981) has used the term 'revelatory ideograph' for this stage:

> As the Higher Mind brings a greater consciousness into the being through the spiritual idea and its power of truth, so the Illumined Mind brings in a still greater consciousness through a Truth Sight and Truth Light and its seeing and seizing power. It can effect a more powerful and dynamic integration; it illumines the thought-mind with a direct inner vision and inspiration, brings a spiritual sight into the heart and a spiritual light and energy into its feeling and emotion, imparts to the life-force a spiritual urge, a truth inspiration that dynamises the action and exalts the life movements; it infuses into the sense a direct and total power of spiritual sensation so that our vital and physical being can contact and meet concretely, quite as intensely as the mind and emotion can conceive and perceive and feel, the Divine in all things; it throws on the physical mind a transforming light that breaks its limitations, its conservative inertia, replaces its narrow thought-power and its doubts by sight and pours luminosity and consciousness into the very cells of the body. In the transformation by the Higher Mind the spiritual sage and thinker would find his total and dynamic fulfilment; in the transformation by the Illumined Mind there would be a similar fulfilment for the seer, the illumined mystic, those in whom the soul lives in vision and in a direct sense and experience: for it is from these higher sources that they receive their light and to rise into that light and live there would be their ascension to their native empire.

Intuitive mind

With the settling in of the illumined mind we can move further up in the gradient of consciousness and experience the intuitive mind. Here we encounter the truth touch—knowledge leaps out at us in front of our eyes and waits for them to be clear enough to register it. Sri Aurobindo (2005, pp. 981–982) referred to intuition as 'truth-remembrance':

> Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity. It is when the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting; or when the consciousness, even without any such meeting, looks into itself and feels directly and intimately the truth or the truths that are there or so contacts the hidden forces behind appearances, then also there is the outbreak of an intuitive light; or, again, when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contactual union with it, then the spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth-perception is lit in its depths. This close perception is more than sight, more than conception: it is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence. A concealed or slumbering identity, not yet recovering itself, still remembers or conveys by the intuition its own contents and the intimacy of its self-feeling and self-vision of things, its light of truth, its overwhelming and automatic certitude. In the human mind the intuition is even such a truth-remembrance or truth-conveyance, or such a revealing flash or blaze breaking into a great mass of ignorance or through a veil of nescience: but we have seen that it is subject there to an invading mixture or a mental coating or an interception and substitution; there is too a manifold possibility of misinterpretation which comes in the way of the purity and fullness of its action.

Overmind

Beyond the intuitive mind we begin to become aware of a greater unity, a oneness, a higher and more complete Truth. The overmind is a global cognitive field in which there is no chaos—all is linked together. We now know that all religions are the faces of the same one Divine. Sri Aurobindo (2005, pp. 984–986) notes:

> The next step of the ascent brings us to the Overmind; the intuitional change can only be an introduction to this higher spiritual overture. But we have seen that the Overmind, even when it is selective and not total in its action, is still a power of cosmic consciousness, a principle of global knowledge which carries in it a delegated light from the supramental gnosis. It is, therefore, only by an opening into the cosmic consciousness that the overmind ascent and descent can be made wholly possible: a high and intense individual opening upwards is not sufficient, —to that vertical ascent towards summit Light there must be added a vast horizontal expansion of the consciousness into some totality of the Spirit. At the least, the inner being must already have replaced by its deeper and wider awareness the surface mind and its limited outlook and learned to live in a large universality; for otherwise the overmind view of things and the overmind dynamism will have no room to move in and effectuate its dynamic operations. When the overmind descends, the predominance of the centralising ego-sense is entirely subordinated, lost in largeness of being and finally abolished; a wide cosmic perception and feeling of a boundless universal self and movement replaces it: many motions that were formerly ego-centric may

> still continue, but they occur as currents or ripples in the cosmic wideness. Thought, for the most part, no longer seems to originate individually in the body or the person but manifests from above or comes in upon the cosmic mindwaves: all inner individual sight or intelligence of things is now a revelation or illumination of what is seen or comprehended, but the source of the revelation is not in one's separate self but in the universal knowledge; the feelings, emotions, sensations are similarly felt as waves from the same cosmic immensity breaking upon the subtle and the gross body and responded to in kind by the individual centre of the universality; for the body is only a small support or even less, a point of relation, for the action of a vast cosmic instrumentation. In this boundless largeness, not only the separate ego but all sense of individuality, even of a subordinated or instrumental individuality, may entirely disappear; the cosmic existence, the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic delight, the play of cosmic forces are alone left: if the delight or the centre of Force is felt in what was the personal mind, life or body, it is not with a sense of personality but as a field of manifestation, and this sense of the delight or of the action of Force is not confined to the person or the body but can be felt at all points in an unlimited consciousness of unity which pervades everywhere. But there can be many formulations of overmind consciousness and experience; for the overmind has a great plasticity and is a field of multiple possibilities. In place of an uncentred and unplaced diffusion there may be the sense of the universe in oneself or as oneself: but there too this self is not the ego; it is an extension of a free and pure essential self-consciousness or it is an identification with the All,—the extension or the identification constituting a cosmic being, a universal individual.

Supermind

The final stage in the ascent of consciousness is the supermind. In fact, this is a principle of existence or a kind of consciousness which has become accessible to human beings only at the current stage of evolution. This consciousness has descended and once we have made contact with it, it is capable of transforming our entire nature. This entails a radical and complete shift in awareness and psychological functioning which will bring about a change in humans as drastic as the one when mental, rational faculties first emerged in human consciousness. In this process the supramental consciousness descends into the lower mental, vital and physical being. In fact, the basic goal of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga is that by the conscious collaboration of humans the supramental principle will lead to an evolution of the species to a new stage of being. At the present stage of human evolution, it is the rational mind which is considered the most superior faculty, and this gives us an edge over all other species. But the early humans—hominids—did not have this capacity to the degree it is developed in us. They were, in Sri Aurobindo's terminology, at an 'infrarational stage' where instincts, immediate needs and desires ruled their behaviour. But humans continue to evolve further towards a 'suprarational' stage marked by a higher gnostic consciousness:

> Our evolution starts with an infrarational stage in which men have not yet learned to refer their life and action in its principles and its forms to the

> judgement of the clarified intelligence; for they still act principally out of their instincts, impulses, spontaneous ideas, vital intuitions or else obey a customary response to desire, need and circumstance,—it is these things that are canalised or crystallised in their social institutions. Man proceeds by various stages out of these beginnings towards a rational age in which his intelligent will more or less developed becomes the judge, arbiter and presiding motive of his thought, feeling and action, … aims and intuitions. Finally, if our analysis and forecast are correct, the human evolution must move through a subjective towards a suprarational or spiritual age in which he will develop progressively a greater spiritual, supra-intellectual and intuitive, perhaps in the end a more than intuitive, a gnostic consciousness. (Sri Aurobindo, 1970b, p. 173)

Sri Aurobindo further notes (2005, pp. 1000–1001):

> Supramental Nature sees everything from the standpoint of oneness and regards all things, even the greatest multiplicity and diversity, even what are to the mind the strongest contradictions, in the light of that oneness; its will, ideas, feelings, sense are made of the stuff of oneness, its actions proceed upon that basis. Mental Nature, on the contrary, thinks, sees, wills, feels, senses with division as a starting-point and has only a constructed understanding of unity; even when it experiences oneness, it has to act from the oneness on a basis of limitation and difference. But the supramental, the divine life is a life of essential, spontaneous and inherent unity. It is impossible for the mind to forecast in detail what the supramental change must be in its parts of life action and outward behaviour or lay down for it what forms it shall create for the individual or the collective existence. For the mind acts by intellectual rule or device or by reasoned choice of will or by mental impulse or in obedience to life impulse; but supramental nature does not act by mental idea or rule or in subjection to any inferior impulse: each of its steps is dictated by an innate spiritual vision, a comprehensive and exact penetration into the truth of all and the truth of each thing; it acts always according to inherent reality, not by the mental idea, not according to an imposed law of conduct or a constructive thought or perceptive contrivance. Its movement is calm, self-possessed, spontaneous, plastic; it arises naturally and inevitably out of a harmonic identity of the truth which is felt in the very substance of the conscious being, a spiritual substance which is universal and therefore intimately one with all that is included in its cognition of existence.

The most striking aspect of the supramental transformation is that it shows us the way out of the current state of being where we often act in ways which are destructive towards members of our own species, those of other species as well as towards nature in general. This is because our present way of being emanates from a narrow and restricted consciousness where the sense of separation is experienced to a greater extent than a sense of connectedness or oneness. The only way out of these violent and destructive ways is by working towards a new way of being and allowing a transformation in consciousness to take place.

> All would change, all would become easy if man could once consent to be spiritualised. The higher perfection of the spiritual life will come by a

> spontaneous obedience of spiritualised man to the truth of his own realised being, when he has become himself, found his own real nature; but this spontaneity will not be instinctive and subconscient as in the animal, but intuitive and fully, integrally conscient. Therefore, the individuals who will most help the future of humanity in the new age, will be those who will recognise a spiritual evolution as the destiny and therefore the great need of the human being, an evolution or conversion of the present type of humanity into a spiritualised humanity, even as the animal man has been largely converted into a highly mentalised humanity. (The Mother, 2003, p. 165)

In summary, Sri Aurobindo's depiction of personality and human existence, refers to a lesser self caught up in the demands of the outer being, which can get transformed into the greater Self via a process of development. This entails first an inward movement leading to the uncovering of the psychic, and then an upward movement through the higher gradations of consciousness, taking one towards the supramental level of awareness, and subsequently a descent of the higher Force into the lower parts—leading to their transformation. This simply means that our whole nature gets converted and we are no longer caught up in the narrow egoistic confines of a delimited consciousness, which identifies with experiences limited to the horizon of the outer being. We are part of something vaster and can get in touch with that transpersonal element, which is the ground of our consciousness. 'It all depends on where the consciousness places itself and concentrates itself. If the consciousness places or concentrates itself within the ego, you are identified with the ego.... If the consciousness puts its stress outside, it is said to live in the external being and becomes oblivious of its inner mind and vital and inmost psychic; if it goes inside, puts its centralising stress there, then it knows itself as the inner being or, still deeper, as the psychic being; if it ascends out of the body to the self where self is naturally conscious of its wideness and freedom it knows itself as the Self and not the mind, life or body' (Sri Aurobindo, 1970a, pp. 235–236). And it is not simply a matter of individual transformation. As noted above, it is the entire human species which is undergoing evolution and as more and more humans come in contact with the descending supramental force, the essential nature of existence on earth will undergo a radical transformation and hence the possibility of 'The Life Divine'.

The preceding account, though only a glimpse of what Sri Aurobindo has outlined, provides the basic framework of the structure and functioning of personality as depicted in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, which in my opinion is the most comprehensive system of psychology available to us, till date. In fact, this system of psychology is so vast that it incorporates major elements of sociology and philosophy as well. A wider reading of Sri Aurobindo's voluminous writings on a gamut of subjects reveals his extraordinary contribution to philosophy, social and political thought, the true understanding of the 'Foundations of Indian Culture'; and of course, his unsurpassable gift to humanity in the form of poetry which culminates and illumines us in and as *Savitri* (literally meaning—light, the title of Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus and final work).

Some applications

Before I address explicitly the applications of Integral Psychology, though implicitly it must already be clear to the reader, I briefly touch on the potential of the Integral view in consolidating all endeavours in psychology both in the East as well as the West. In academic psychology, the major perspectives are those offered by Psychoanalysis, Behaviourism, Cognitive Psychology, Humanistic Psychology and Transpersonal Psychology. With respect to the Integral view, Psychoanalysis focuses on a narrow aspect of existence located within the subconscient—it offers glimpses of a few trees in a vast forest located on a still vaster earth. Behaviourism is concerned with outward behaviour—bodily acts in response to environmental stimuli. In relation to the Integral conception, Behaviourism only touches the outer physical existence. Cognitive Psychology is largely concerned with the workings of the outer mind. Humanistic Psychology is a step inward to the recesses of the psychic. Abraham Maslow, the major proponent of this view referred to lower and higher order needs. Lower needs aimed at sustenance whereas higher ones contributed towards growth. These included the concern for beauty, truth, love, oneness, etc. In other words, Maslow in some way addressed the issue of psychic awakening, without using the term. Whereas Humanistic Psychology takes us to the inner realms, Transpersonal Psychology focuses on the higher planes of consciousness—ascension. Indian perspectives have focused much more on the higher levels of consciousness as evidenced in the outline of the Advaita Vedāntic perspective which was taken up earlier in this chapter. Sri Aurobindo's perspective does justice to all the above-mentioned views, but goes beyond by bringing in the issue of evolution and transformation of the human species, and thus also incorporates the aspect of 'technologies of the self'.

In fact Integral Psychology offers a more complete picture of the human personality and psychological functioning as compared to the other available perspectives, and goes much beyond a mere sum of the parts which would amount to a simple amalgamation of the above mentioned schools of psychology. Within this view it becomes possible to understand isolated experiences and occurrences in one's life against a wider canvas. It helps us in getting in touch with the most essential and fundamental aspect of our existence. Further, the Integral view has potential applications in the area of psychotherapy, parenting, attitude towards work, human relationships, education, organisational behaviour, social work/development, and in the general sense of understanding Integral Yoga as applied psychology. In this chapter, I examine two closely related applications of the Integral approach—the transformation of emotions, and the place of psychic unfoldment in psychotherapy.

The transformation of emotions

As mentioned earlier, Sri Aurobindo uses the term 'psychic' or 'psychic being', for the soul. What is unique in Sri Aurobindo's depiction is that, though in agreement with the pre-existing conception of the soul's immortality and its transmigration from body to body, the psychic is not a static entity, but immensely dynamic

in the sense that it continues to evolve from lifetime to lifetime. The psychic is that part of us that responds to the true and the beautiful; joy and love being its essential nature. Perhaps the single most defining characteristic of psychic consciousness is its groundedness in a deep and unconditional love, devotional in essence, accompanied by a state of sincere and total surrender to the Divine.

This brings us to the subject of *bhakti*. In *Bhakti yoga*, the emotional life of the aspirant or seeker undergoes a gradual transformation, and (s)he begins to reside more and more in a state of pure and unconditional love of, and for the Divine. Looking at it from the *rasa* and *bhāva* perspective, the Indian meta-theory of emotions developed by Bharata, the aspirant attempts to reside more and more in the eighth and highest *rasa,* that of love. To enter into this state, the devotee commonly uses the aids of chanting the name of the preferred deity (Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Durgā, etc.), and singing about his love for the chosen form of divinity. In so doing, the aspirant, or shall we say *rasika*, experiences a dissolution of his/her ego self, wherein everyday connotations and experiences in the mundane human realm around the emotion of love are transcended, and the devotee enters into a state of pure and absolute universal love, devoid of any sense of 'I' or 'mine'.

In general, when we are immersed in an aesthetic experience via exposure to art (for example music or dance), the *bhāvas,* or the experienced emotions are located in a context far removed from one's everyday personal life, and hence we are able to derive *rasa* or a sense of pleasure or delight, even if we are experiencing so called negative emotions like anger and fear. In a sense, the personal or 'I' element melts away, and we find ourselves transported to the realm of pure emotion, devoid of any ego involvement. Now in *Bhakti yoga*, the aspirant as seeker of the Divine, gradually disidentifies with all emotions—except that of love. Thus Rupa Goswami offered a reinterpretation of the original *rasa-bhāva* perspective in terms of major and minor devotional states. In this depiction, love is conceived of as the major *rasa*, the essential emotion state to be sought and attained by the *bhakta*. All other emotions, the minor devotional states, are to be understood as resulting from our seeking of love, which in the early stages of *bhakti* often eludes the devotee, resulting in a state of frustration in our seeking upon encountering failure, or loss of the love we thought we had possessed.

Over time, through continuous and sincere *sādhanā*, the devotee begins to reside more and more in a state of universal love and *ānanda* which is the very nature of the soul and the Spirit. Then out of the sheer joy and sense of completeness of the act, we surrender our entire being to the Divine. In other words, the attempts of the devotee to ground him/her self in universal love leads to the coming forward of the soul or psychic being, our divine essence. The coming forward of the psychic being results in a shift of power in terms of what element of our being exercises control over our life, from the ego to the psychic. This is accompanied by a major affective transformation in our life, as well as profound behavioural change. Our life becomes increasingly characterized by a feeling of goodwill towards all human beings, and we view all and relate to all in terms of unconditional love. And true love is not about taking or getting, only about

giving; and thus selfless service becomes part of our very nature. Perceiving our ground in the Divine, and the ground of all other human beings, all of existence for that matter, in the Divine, we at last experience the truth of the ancient tenet *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* (the world is one family).

The coming forward of the psychic being has another profound consequence. The search for direction in our life, for which we often seek a guru, comes to a close, with the inner guru, our psychic, now performing that function completely and perfectly. There is a certain knowingness about psychic consciousness, which acts as a sure guide in matters of truth and the good and the beautiful. In short, our life is transformed from the life human, to the Life Divine.

Being a psychologist, I cannot stop at this point, for I must reflect on the fuller psychological consequences of the emergence of the psychic as the true centre of our being, and its impact on individual and collective well-being. Notably, we become from a seeker to a 'finder'. In general, an individual who resides in a psychic consciousness radiates an aura of 'healthiness' and well-being. For the psychic ever guides us to what is good for our whole being, and the dominant emotion is that of love and joy, which by its very nature is integral and complete.

The place of love in psychotherapy and spiritual healing

Consciousness is contagious. Thus, in my opinion, a psychologist or more accurately a counsellor/psychotherapist who is chiefly concerned with restoring a state of health and well-being in his clients, must him/her self be a relatively permanent member of the abode of well-being, which in itself is a hallmark of psychic existence. In other words, to be an effective therapist, a tremendous amount of self-work/*sādhanā* has to be carried out on the part of the therapist (one who facilitates healing, and thus restores health). More than anything else, it is the consciousness of the therapist interacting with the consciousness of the client that brings about a positive change in the client, from a state of suffering to a state of well-being.

In general, the Indian view of existence is that of the journey of the Divine in a person. All struggles and suffering in life represent a movement from an infra-rational (animal) existence, to a more rational (human) existence, and further, towards a yet greater supra-rational (Divine) existence and end-state of Truth and Bliss and Peace and Beatitude. This is the human journey; from a life of obscure beginnings in a half-lit animal-human consciousness, to an increasingly diviner humanity. And the counsellor/therapist who can assist us in this journey is but a fellow traveller who has walked ahead of us from a life of relative darkness to a life of increasing Light. Only one who has mastered swimming to a high degree can save the one who is drowning, and so is the case with therapy.

For convenience, the process of psychotherapy can be divided into two stages. The first is the movement from a weak ego state (low level of autonomy) to a strong ego state. This is the goal of most psychotherapy in the West. The second, and in my opinion the more important goal is the movement from the ego to the Self, or the shift in government from the ego to the psychic. This is the more common goal in the context of spiritual healing. Thus Sudhir Kakar, the noted

psychoanalyst states (in personal communication) that 'Psychoanalysis is undergraduate work, and spirituality is post graduate work'. Freud had stated that the goal of psychoanalysis is 'To make the unconscious, conscious'. In the original German, Freud said, '*Wo es war, soll Ich werden'*—Where it (the impersonal and unconscious) was, let the I (personal and conscious) become. Kabir Das has beautifully expressed the transformation that takes place on the spiritual path, 'When I was, God was not; Now God is, I am not' (*Jab mai tha tab Hari naahi; Ab Hari hai, mai nahi*). Thus from the vantage point of spirituality, the goal of psychotherapy/healing and growth is summarized as such: 'Where I was, let Thou become'.

In general, I can confidently state that the most essential pre-requisite on the part of the therapist/spiritual guide for healing to take place, is a posture of and groundedness in unconditional love. Without this, healing cannot begin, and thus the importance of self- work/*sādhanā*. This has been noted in the western context by the eminent psychotherapist Carl Rogers in his emphasis of the absolute necessity of the attitude of 'unconditional positive regard' on the part of the therapist toward the client, and more explicitly by the eminent psychiatrist M. Scott Peck in his well-known work, *The Road Less Traveled*. A moment's reflection on healing in the traditional Indian context immediately reveals that when individuals in distress approach their guru, the healing process begins with the love and unconditional acceptance of the person in distress, by the guru. Thus, at the risk of overstating, I again underscore the key importance of self-work on the part of the therapist/guru.

Love has an extraordinary transformative power which can heal all breaches and wounds in our consciousness, and eventually liberate us from fear, guilt, and egoism. It is via the showering of love from without that love awakens in our being (psychic consciousness), may it be love in the romantic human sense, or in the spiritual divine sense. One of the greatest discoveries that we can make in our lifetime is that the source of love is within us, and not without. Till some such time, we continue to roam about lost like the musk deer, forever seeking the fragrance of love all about, not realizing that the secret source of love lies within us hid deep in our very bosom, waiting to be discovered. Thus Huston Smith (1997, p. 334) notes:

> It remained for the twentieth century to discover that locked within the atom is the energy of the sun itself. For this energy to be released, however, the atom must be bombarded from without. So too, locked in every human being is the store of love that partakes of the Divine — *the imago dei,* image of God, as it is sometimes called. And it too can be activated only through bombardment, in it's case, love's bombardment. If we too felt loved, not abstractly or in principle but vividly and personally, by one who unites all power and perfection, the experience would melt our fear, guilt, and self-concern permanently. As Kierkegaard said, if at every moment both present and future I were certain that nothing has happened and nothing can ever happen that would separate us from the infinite love of the Infinite, that would be the reason for joy.

An equally or even more profound impact of love is its capacity to transform evil. As a therapist/spiritual healer, one encounters all sorts of individuals, even those who have a chequered past and may best be described as 'bad' or even 'evil'. These are individuals who have no regard for the happiness and well-being of others, and do not hesitate to hurt others, even those who are supposedly close to them. Upon encountering such persons, one feels disgust in their presence, and the first reaction is to distance oneself from them. As a therapist/spiritual healer, one may at times be unable to feel love for these individuals, and is thus unable to help them. In such cases, the person remains unchanged, the world remains the same, and evil continues to exist. Yet, perhaps the only truly effective way to deal with evil is to transform it through love. M. Scott Peck (1990, p. 309) who has deeply reflected on this issue and has worked extensively in this area, points out that:

> The healing of evil—scientifically or otherwise—can be accomplished only by the love of individuals. A willing sacrifice is required. The individual healer must allow his or her soul to become the battleground. He or she must sacrificially absorb the evil. Then what prevents the destruction of that soul? If one takes the evil itself into one's heart like a spear, how can one's goodness still survive. Even if the evil is vanquished, thereby will not the good be also? …
>
> I do not know how this occurs, but I know that it does. I know that good people can deliberately allow themselves to be pierced by the evil of others, to be broken thereby, yet somehow not broken. To be even killed in some sense and yet still survive and not succumb. Whenever this happens, there is a slight shift in the balance of power in the world.

In this way we obtain a glimpse of the extraordinary transformative potential of *bhakti*. To begin with, to reside more and more in a state of love is in itself an extremely positive state of being, one most conducive to health and well-being. And this also has a profound impact on one's dealings with others, as these are characterized by a posture of giving and serving, devoid of any ulterior motives of gaining something. Further, the increasing experience of universal love facilitates the act of complete surrender to the Divine, as a spontaneous and integral process. This is an extraordinarily empowering experience—the shift from a narrow ego-bound consciousness to a psychic consciousness grounded in the true Self.

A groundedness in love is perhaps the most essential quality which must be present in the being of a psychotherapist/spiritual healer. This quality cannot be obtained by any external study or degrees, and can be acquired only through intense self-work/*sādhanā*. The role of love in the healing of psychological wounds and hurts, and the transformative power of love in its encounter with evil, is only beginning to be fully appreciated by psychologists, in India and elsewhere.

Concluding remarks

The future of psychology as a truly useful, emancipating, liberating, and life-giving discipline lies in bringing back soul and Spirit to its rightful place at the centre stage of psychology, and existence at large. To this end, Integral Psychology has

a great deal to offer. But most important in the present context are the insights provided by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, for attaining individual and collective transformation, leading to a lasting human unity and global peace. Guided by their vision, I continue to be astounded by the increasingly clear indications of a new social order—one characterized by a deep unconditional love, joy, peace and harmony. The signs may be dim and indirect at times, but their certain implications are abundantly clear.

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10

An integral approach to our psychic centre

Brant Cortright

This chapter integrates two diverse streams of psychology—Western and Eastern. Each of these streams has made profound discoveries about the psyche, human consciousness, the nature of fragmentation, and the possibility for wholeness. Yet psychology in the West and psychology in the East have travelled from two different directions and developed very different areas of knowledge. This chapter begins with a broad characterization of these two streams of psychological thought in order to highlight these differences.

Psychology in the West looks from the *outside in*, whereas psychology in the East looks from the *inside out*. These two perspectives give two very different views of psychology. By looking from the *outside in*, Western psychology has developed very detailed, precise maps of the outer being, the body-heart-mind organism and the surface structures of the self; whereas Eastern psychology's view from the *inside out* has generated very detailed maps of our inner being and the spiritual foundation of consciousness. Each has essential knowledge about human existence, yet each focuses on only half of this psycho-spiritual totality. Each requires the other to complete it, and only in bringing them together does an integral view of psychology emerge.

Western depth psychology ascribes our lack of wholeness and painful fragmentation to the universal experience of psychological wounding. *We do not know the fullness of who we are because our wounding makes us unconscious of it*. While some people are wounded more severely, and some less—we all are wounded. To be born into this world is to be emotionally hurt and scarred growing up. Our response to this wounding is to push it down, contract, and develop a defensive structure in which large portions of our very self become unconscious. We become lost, isolated from others, cut off and alienated from our own deeper self. Western psychotherapy is an attempt to understand and repair this fragmented wholeness.

Eastern psychology sees a different cause for our fragmentation and suffering—*we are cut off from the spiritual ground of our being*. We identify with the surface life of our body and ego—our desires, feelings, sensations, thoughts—and so are unconscious of our spiritual source. Eastern psychological practices aim at bringing peace and harmony into our living so we may go deeply inside to find the true fulfilment intrinsic to our spiritual core.

The human predicament, then, is characterized by a double fragmentation. It is a dual diagnosis we suffer from—a psycho-spiritual fracture—and dual therefore must be the path to wholeness.

It must be conceded from the outset that while Western psychology has generated a great mass of detailed knowledge of the surface of the psyche, it has failed to penetrate its deeper mysteries, for even depth psychology is but a psychology of the frontal self and its unconscious processes. Western psychology has only explored the surface of consciousness because its instruments of investigation are fragmentary and limited. Further, a post-modern perspective raises the question of what becomes 'knowledge' in psychology. Historically what constitutes psychological knowledge has been narrowly Western and excluded cultures in which the depth of psychological thought in significant ways surpasses the West.

As science so often reminds us, real understanding comes only when we look past the surface appearance of things into their deeper nature. Otherwise, for example, we are led to believe the initial view given by our senses that the sun travels around the earth. Just as we need to look beyond first appearances in astronomy, physics, and other hard sciences, so we need to look deeply in psychology. As more sophisticated instruments have advanced the hard sciences—microscopes, telescopes, particle accelerators—so more sophisticated methods of consciousness exploration has allowed Eastern psychology to come upon a deeper, wider, more fundamental knowledge of the psyche than Western psychology.

To understand the depths of human consciousness, the instrument of exploration can only be consciousness itself. The West's 'outside in' approach of external observations, brain imaging instruments such as MRIs, fMRIs, EEGs and PET scans, and even the surface introspective methods of depth psychotherapy, helpful as they are, will only take us so far. To bring about a more complete understanding, well-defined methods of inner exploration must be employed, and it is in this area that the Eastern meditative traditions excel, for Eastern spiritual systems are the result of centuries of rigorous, precise applications of methods for examining inner states of consciousness.

India has made a highly disciplined study of consciousness and the psyche for millennia. Although traditional Western psychology has relegated Eastern psychological thought to philosophy or religion, a current appraisal of psychology must include Eastern cultures' contributions to psychology. As globalization increases, the current Western-centric view of psychology (Cushman, 1995) is being counterbalanced by developments such as the recent movement of 'Indian psychology' (Cornelissen & Joshi, 2004), which seeks to re-own Indian psychological insights and situate them in their proper field of psychology. From a global perspective, a strictly Western definition of psychology that excludes the East's profound discoveries appears to be a rather parochial view of the subject.

The meeting of East and West

The East and the West come together in the melding of Eastern spiritual wisdom with Western scientific knowledge. The East has looked inside to discover the

ultimate spiritual truths of existence. The West has looked outside to discover the powerful, but relative truths of science. As psychology represents the West's scientific effort to understand the inner psyche, it becomes the common ground where these two great streams of knowing join, the natural meeting place of East and West.

To understand the depths of the human psyche, traditional psychology is necessary, but not sufficient. Academic and scientific psychology in the West have made a massive study of the outermost surface of the body, heart and mind; and the depth psychologies fill out a deeper picture of our frontal organism. For the most part Western psychology has now moved beyond the mind-body split—that characterized much of psychological discourse during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century—to see this outer identity in holistic terms, that is, as an organismic, body-mind unity.

From an integral perspective this is true as far as it goes. It does well represent our surface experience. But as we look further, a more complex picture reveals itself. The self is only the outer edge of consciousness, where many inner strands of experience meet and fuse into a totality of organismic experiencing. But as Eastern psychology insists, a deeper, spiritual core manifests this outer mind, heart and body. The frontal organism we identify with and call ourselves is an expression of our deeper being, and only in reference to this deeper foundation can there be a more complete psychological understanding.

The mystery of our psychic centre

The finding of our true psychic centre together with practical means for unveiling it are perhaps the most significant contributions of integral psychology to human welfare, for the discovery of our psychic centre profoundly changes the entire experience of living. Instead of the stressful play of opposites that characterizes normal living—pleasure and pain, frustration and satisfaction, hope and despair—there is a steady light of inner guidance, a peaceful, loving presence that is ever fresh, ever new, a joyous, self-existent bliss in the centre of our being.

It is an extraordinary notion that the essence of our deepest identity is a self-existent joy, an immense peace, an unfaltering guidance and discernment, an inexpressible sweetness, love and light. This view runs so counter to prevailing psychological thought as to be revolutionary. Yet this is precisely what Eastern psychology has confirmed for thousands of years. Integral psychology reorients psychology from its exclusive preoccupation with the frontal self and organism to include the deeper, guiding psychic centre within.

The central being

According to Indian psychology, our fundamental identity is spiritual, and in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, this central spiritual identity consists of two aspects, called by various names—spirit, *ātman*, Self on the one hand and soul, psychic

centre, psychic being, *antarātman*, *caitya puruṣa* on the other. The Self or *ātman* is our eternal, unevolving oneness with Brahman, the Divine. It stands outside the evolution—silent, detached, impartial, and unaffected by life. The soul or psychic centre, however, participates in the evolution and itself undergoes a dynamic development. It is both immortal and growing in the evolution, developing new powers and capacities in each lifetime, actualizing new potentials in its journey toward maturity.

> The ancient, effulgent being, the indwelling spirit, subtle, deep-hidden in the lotus of the Heart, is hard to know. But the wise person following the path of meditation, knows him and is freed alike from pleasures and pain (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1:2:12; as translated by Swami Prabhavananda & F. Manchester, 1947, pp. 17–18).

The *Upaniṣads* are generally regarded as the high point of Vedāntic philosophy, and in the *Upaniṣads* it is the *caitya puruṣa* located in the secret cave in the heart that corresponds to what Sri Aurobindo (1973, p. 149) calls the psychic centre.

> According to the ancient teaching the seat of the immanent Divine, the hidden Purusha, is in the mystic heart, — the secret heart-cave, *hṛdaye guhāyām*, as the Upanishads put it, — and, according to the experience of many Yogins, it is from its depths that there comes the voice or the breath of the inner oracle.

It must be remembered that the psychic centre is not located in the physical heart or in the heart *cakra*, though it is often confused with this heart centre. It is located behind the heart *cakra*, deep within on an inner plane. The many images of the Christ pointing to his own open heart confirms Christ as the great Western teacher of this inmost soul within the heart, for the opening of the heart *cakra* is a precondition for the full emergence of the psychic centre.

> The psychic being in the old systems was spoken of as the Purusha in the heart (the secret heart—*hṛdaye guhāyām*) which corresponds very well to what we define as the psychic being behind the heart centre. It was also this that went out from the body at death and persisted—which again corresponds to our teaching that it is this which goes out and returns, linking a new life to former life. Also we say that the psychic is the divine portion within us—so too the Purusha in the heart is described as Ishwara [Personal Divine] of the individual nature. (Sri Aurobindo, 1971, p. 289)

All theistic traditions focus on the centrality of the soul—Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Bhakti schools of Vedānta. All theistic traditions view our inmost identity as an immortal soul. What Integral Yoga adds to these descriptions is the evolutionary aspect of the soul. The significance of the soul as our evolutionary guide could not have been appreciated by the earlier theistic traditions because the evolutionary nature of the cosmos was then not as central as it is now to our present understanding of the world. The significance of the psychic centre as the evolutionary principle within us becomes clear only as the evolution of consciousness is seen as the great theme of world existence. However, even as far back as the *Vedas* there

was an awareness of the soul's upward movement and of the importance of the soul's guidance in this process.

The evolutionary nature of the soul can be confusing, for it is both eternal and an indestructible portion of the Divine and simultaneously a growing, developing centre of consciousness. It is initially a seed of potential that contains all Divine possibilities within it. Its growth is a process of unfolding these latent powers. The psychic centre is spirit in manifestation, ever alive, ever whole, ever pure, yet also progressing as it evolves new abilities out of itself. We are accustomed to think that eternal = static or pure being; but this applies only to the *ātman*, the immobile, non-evolving portion of our spiritual nature. Eternal can also be in the mode of becoming; and it is this eternal becoming that completes our spiritual identity, and fulfils the evolutionary movement of the Divine creation. We are both an eternal *being* and *becoming*—at one level a static, silent witness that supports all impartially; while simultaneously, on another level, an evolving becoming, a divine participant on the world stage growing toward fullness.

> It is necessary to understand clearly the difference between the evolving soul (psychic being) and the pure Atman, self or spirit. The pure self is unborn, does not pass through death or birth, is independent of birth or body, mind or life or this manifested Nature. It is not bound by these things, not limited, not affected, even though it assumes and supports them. The soul, on the contrary, is something that comes down into birth and passes through death—although it does not itself die, for it is immortal—from one state to another, from the earth plane to other planes and back again to the earth-existence. It goes on with this progression from life to life through an evolution which leads it up to the human state and evolves through it all a being of itself which we call the psychic being that supports the evolution and develops a physical, a vital, a mental human consciousness as its instruments of world-experience and of a disguised, imperfect, but growing self-expression. All this it does from behind a veil showing something of its divine self only in so far as the imperfection of the instrumental being will allow it. But a time comes when it is able to prepare to come out from behind the veil, to take command and turn all the instrumental nature towards a divine fulfilment. This is the beginning of the true spiritual life. The soul is able now to make itself ready for a higher evolution of manifested consciousness than the mental human—it can pass from the mental to the spiritual and through degrees of the spiritual to the supramental state. Till then there is no reason why it should cease from birth, it cannot in fact do so. If having reached the spiritual state, it wills to pass out of the terrestrial manifestation, it may indeed do so—but there is also possible a higher manifestation, in the Knowledge and not in the Ignorance. (Sri Aurobindo, 1971, pp. 438–439)

In the spiritual history of humanity it appears that full enlightenment, or the permanent realization of the *ātman*, is exceedingly rare. There are probably no more than a handful of fully enlightened beings on earth at a given time. However, an initial awareness of the psychic centre is a far more available and common experience, and even its full realization leads not away from the earth plane, but to

an active involvement with earth's ongoing evolution. As the quote above implies, the psychic emergence is the flowering of the evolutionary journey and the beginning of another step in humanity's evolutionary progress. Such a transformation requires a continuity in identity, and this means the realization of the soul, which is our true spiritual individuality.

Integral Yoga psychology begins with the assumption that this universe does have a purpose, so that simply to nullify existence through *nirvānic* extinction cannot be the entire meaning of life. In seeing our life's journey as an evolution of consciousness, discovering our psychic centre assumes the highest importance, since it is through our true identity that we can more consciously and creatively participate in the miracle of this living universe. The increasing influence of the psychic centre is not only accessible to ordinary people, it is also the path of fulfilment in daily living, for it holds the key to finding our way amidst the confusion of the world around us.

The nature and growth of our psychic centre

The experience of the true inner centre of our being is of a self-existent bliss, an intense inner happiness. A very palpable sense of joy is usually the first thing that greets us as our innermost centres awaken. This joy is in no way dependent upon outer circumstances. It is intrinsic to the true being. Its essential nature is ever possessed of an exquisite, indescribable contentment and utter fulfilment.

This is a fulfilment that is unlike any other, for it is a fulfilment that does not simply bask in itself or remain static. This is a dynamic fulfilment that is energizing, inspiring, and seeks creative expression and further divine fulfilment. The experience of this inherent joy far surpasses the fleeting, surface satisfactions of regular life. Although people seek satisfaction through people and things, religious traditions suggest that it is this inner, spiritual wholeness that is being sought through these outer pursuits. A single taste of this true happiness can be enough to change the direction of a person's life, for it opens us to possibilities undreamed of before. For many people it is just such an experience that marks the beginning of the spiritual journey.

Along with this unparalleled contentment comes an inner quietude and deep peace, in the biblical phrase, 'the peace that passeth all understanding'. This peace comes from deep within, and when it extends to the surface it brings a tranquillity and calm to the mind and heart. This sense of peace brings an overpowering relief from the stress and anxiety that so pervade everyday life. It brings a comfort and solace which relieves our cares and burdens.

Spiritual traditions also concur that to experience soul is to experience a vastness of love and compassion that makes the ordinary experience of these feelings pale in comparison. Jesus Christ is the best known exemplar in the West of the realization of the soul and the possibilities that can manifest with the psychic transformation. Christ emphasized the power of love in the experience of the soul, and it is no accident that all theistic traditions have a strong orientation toward

the heart together with practices of love and devotion. In experiencing vast spiritual love, we see what a diminished figure love assumes in everyday life, even as it originates from this deeper, purer immensity. The psychic centre feels a loving kinship with all other beings and the whole of creation. And most of all, the psychic centre feels a loving relationship with the Divine, for it brings an awareness of the Presence of the Divine. A portion of the Divine, it aspires for full union. As the experience of the psychic centre grows, so does the awareness of the Divine grow stronger and more clear and definite.

The psychic centre moves always toward harmony, truth, beauty, goodness and tenderness. Its intrinsic nature is spiritual, and to these higher spiritual values it is irresistibly attracted. But at first its voice is overshadowed by the clamour of the body, heart and mind.

The spark within

Every living being has a spark of the Divine within. This spark soul is present in every bacteria and unicellular organism. The *ātman* at this beginning evolutionary stage is identical to the *ātman* at all other evolutionary stages, but the psychic centre, though its potential is fully present, has yet to be unfolded and actualized. In plants this psychic presence becomes stronger and more developed, but it remains a spark. In the animal this psychic presence becomes stronger and better defined, as anyone sensitive to animals can feel. There is a beginning of mind in animals and therefore a greater means of expression than in plants, but in animals this mentality is still barely developed and imprisoned by the senses.

Psychic development reaches a new stage in human beings. Here the spark has become a flame; and a definite psychic centre has been formed, though it is still far from maturity. In the first stages of human evolution this psychic centre continues to focus on building up the body, heart and mind, and has little influence on the life of the person. Developing the frontal, instrumental nature is its first task, as the outwardness and density of the surface instruments obscure the soul's inner intimations. During these first stages of the human level, the person is almost completely lost in the outer world, seeking only to satisfy physical, emotional and mental desires. The surface instruments run the whole show.

As the psychic centre progresses it works to refine and purify this frontal nature so that body, heart and mind will be responsive to this light and take their true place as instruments that express the inner soul. The guidance of the psychic centre is a direct form of spiritual knowing—for the psychic has within it a discernment that is not misled by outer appearances, but can see beyond to the deeper truth that surface appearances often hide. In our life journey, our psychic centre is our true guide.

As the psychic matures and grows stronger, it exerts an increasing influence upon the frontal nature, and the person begins to turn inward, to experience a greater depth in living rather than being confined to the superficial life of the surface. Our psychic centre draws us toward higher, nobler things in life. It is what attracts us to genuine love, to truth, to beauty, to peace, to bliss, to

authenticity, to health, to wholeness. Sometimes, especially when the psychic centre is less developed, we are attracted to an image of these things and get lost in the outer appearances, such as sentimental piety, proclamations of love but not its inner feeling, raucous energy, blind passion, moralistic rules or even repressive Puritanism. But such mistakes are necessary in the soul's growth, for by trial and error we learn the difference between surface appearances, desires and our deeper psychic guidance.

Through this the psychic becomes stronger, more insistent, more able to influence the frontal self. It acts to edify and cleanse our frontal nature so that we can choose more freely and clearly, less enslaved by the insistence of our impulses and emotional nature. As the psychic centre awakens, it brings a guidance, a light, a new and deeper perspective that changes the orientation of the person and leads him or her inward.

> There are always two different consciousnesses in the human being, one outward in which he ordinarily lives, the other inward and concealed of which he knows nothing. When one does sadhana, the inner consciousness begins to open and one is able to go inside and have all kinds of experiences there. As the sadhana progresses, one begins to live more and more in this inner being and the outer becomes more and more superficial. At first the inner consciousness seems to be the dream and the outer the waking reality. Afterwards the inner consciousness becomes the reality and the outer is felt by many as a dream or delusion, or else as something superficial and external. The inner consciousness begins to be a place of deep peace, light, happiness, love, closeness to the Divine or the presence of the Divine, the Mother. One is then aware of two consciousnesses, the inner one and the outer which has to be changed into its counterpart and instrument. (Sri Aurobindo, 1971, p. 307)

At first these are two seemingly unrelated worlds—the inner spiritual world and the outer world of regular life. Though the inner light seems faint at first, gradually it becomes brighter. Over time this light shines farther outward and begins to illumine our way in the outer world, even as it is still easily overshadowed by our mental patterns and emotional preferences and habits. Indeed, as we shall see, it is our wounding, our unconscious defences, and our emotional reactivity that are the greatest barriers to the psychic light. To fully liberate this light is a goal of integral psychology.

This process of psychic emergence, of living in two parallel worlds or consciousnesses is difficult to navigate at times. It is easy to doubt or dismiss what is occurring when the inner world is just starting to open because it is so easily overcome by the momentum of the frontal self. For a long time, these two worlds may seem very distinct and separate, like oil and water. But through sustained practice and aspiration, the psychic light grows stronger. Progressively it becomes a guiding force in daily life, not separate from, but part of outer living. Finally, as the psychic influence pervades the body, heart, and mind and transforms these surface instruments, at last the psychic centre comes to the front of the consciousness and takes direct charge of the organism, opening the person fully to the spiritual realm.

> As the crust of the outer nature cracks, as the walls of inner separation break down, the inner light gets through, the inner fire burns in the heart, the substance of the nature and the stuff of consciousness refine to a greater subtlety and purity, and the deeper psychic experiences, those which are not solely of an inner mental or inner vital character, become possible in this subtler, purer, finer substance; the soul begins to unveil itself, the psychic personality reaches its full stature. The soul, the psychic entity, then manifests itself as the central being which upholds mind and life and body and supports all the other powers and functions of the Spirit; it takes up its greater function as the guide and ruler of the nature. A guidance, a governance begins from within which exposes every movement to the light of Truth, repels what is false, obscure, opposed to the divine realisation: every region of the being, every nook and corner of it… is lighted up with the unerring psychic light, their confusions dissipated, their tangles disentangled, their self-deceptions precisely indicated and removed; all is purified, set right, the whole nature harmonised, modulated in the psychic key, put in spiritual order. This process may be rapid or tardy according to the amount of obscurity and resistance still left in the nature, but it goes on unfalteringly so long as it is not complete…
>
> This is the first result, but the second is a free inflow of all kinds of spiritual experience, experience of the Self, experience of the Ishwara and the Divine Shakti, experience of cosmic consciousness, a direct touch with cosmic forces and with the occult movements of universal Nature, a psychic sympathy and unity and inner communication and interchanges of all kinds with other beings and with Nature, illuminations of the mind by knowledge, illuminations of the heart by love and devotion and spiritual joy and ecstasy, illuminations of the sense and the body by higher experience, illuminations of dynamic action in the truth and largeness of a purified mind and heart and soul, the certitudes of the divine light and guidance, the joy and power of the divine force working in the will and the conduct. These experiences are the result of an opening outward of the inner and inmost being and nature; for then there comes into play the soul's power of unerring inherent consciousness, its vision, its touch on things which is superior to any mental cognition; there is there, native to the psychic consciousness in its pure working, an immediate sense of the world and its beings, a direct inner contact with them and a direct contact with the Self and with the Divine,—a direct knowledge, a direct sight of Truth and of all truths, a direct penetrating spiritual emotion and feeling, a direct intuition of right will and right action, a power to rule and to create an order of the being not by the gropings of the superficial self, but from within, from the inner truth of self and things. (Sri Aurobindo, 1970, pp. 907–908)

The psychic transformation occurs by degrees. First there is an opening to our psychic centre, an experience that profoundly reorients our life and direction. Difficulties, pain, trials, suffering still come as they do to everyone, but there is a centre of bliss inside that no outer event can touch. Mistakes are still made since we cannot listen perfectly to the deeper guidance, and the surface self's habitual reactions have a strong forward thrust. But slowly, as the psychic centre awakens,

it becomes a guiding force in our lives. This inner guidance also protects us from the dangers of the inner journey, for in Integral Yoga psychology the psychic centre brings discernment (*viveka*), and is the only part of the being that cannot be touched by the tempting powers of the intermediate zone.[1] As this proceeds, our life harmonizes with our inner being so that all parts of our existence become increasingly aligned with our deeper psychic centre—our work, our play, our relationships, our diet, our exercise, our entertainment, the books we read, the influences and experiences we open to. In this process, the ego becomes increasingly transparent, purified and receptive to the psychic's direction. The frontal self undergoes a psychic transformation that thoroughly alters its make-up.

In Western psychology, however, our psychological centre is viewed from the perspective of our ordinary, frontal self. To more clearly understand the psychic centre or true soul, it is necessary to consider what it is confused with, in Western psychology, and what hides it—the ego, the self.

Western understandings of our psychological centre

We all experience life from the perspective of a subjective self, an ego, the sense of 'I'. It is a fact of our daily life. What is the essence of this 'I'-ness? It lies in this: the feeling of identity, of being a person, a subjectivity. It is not only a sense of presence or being or existence, but of being *a* presence, *a* being, *an* existence, the experience and feeling of, 'I am, I exist'. Where does this fundamental source of selfhood come from?

What Western psychology has studied in great detail is what is experienced as the self on the surface, the ego. In conventional psychology the ego is generally regarded as the centre of psychological life. Psychoanalytic theory even goes so far as to define the ego as 'the seat of consciousness'. Further, it delineates numerous characteristics and functions of the ego, such as reality testing, memory, the control of motility and impulse control, orientation in space and the centre of perception. It integrates the demands of external reality with inner psychological life, resulting in the development of the unconscious, for the ego controls the unconscious defence mechanisms that keep unacceptable feelings and parts of the self out of awareness.

Yet despite how much psychology has learned about the self, there remain fundamental questions that cannot be resolved within the paradigm of conventional psychology. For Western psychology, like all of science, starts from the surface appearance of things and tries to understand the deeper structure from without. But this method has definite limits in the field of psychology. Traditional psychology has been unable to plumb the inner depths of the psyche because its methodology of empirical observation can only go as far as the physical mind can go. It is unable to see beyond into our deeper being. The self, for all that psychology has learned about it, remains a mystery.

Svabhāva

From an integral perspective both the sense of self and the sense of continuity emanate from our psychic centre, our true soul. Without reference to this eternal soul the experience of selfhood cannot be understood. Vedāntic psychology holds that our true psychic centre is the soul, called the *caitya puruṣa* or *antarātman* in the *Upaniṣads*, and is the real spiritual person within, our evolving soul. Each unique 'soul is a force of self-consciousness that formulates an idea of the Divine in it and guides by that its action and evolution, its progressive self-finding, its constant varying self-expression…. That is our Svabhava, our own real nature' (Sri Aurobindo, 1973, p. 502).

It is from our psychic centre that our sense of self ultimately derives. The psychic centre manifests this instrumental nature and infuses our organismic existence with its sense of identity, and the various self-images and identifications form its outward skeletal structure. The psychic centre fills in this skeletal structure of the self-image to provide the feeling of being a person, a being. It is because of the deeper soul that we have the phenomenological experience of being an existence, a presence, instead of being an empty succession of images with no person within. In other words, Vedāntic psychology suggests that the self's sense of stability and continuity is present because it reflects a deeper spiritual fact of our existence, the eternity of our soul. Continuity and stability are facts of our deepest, most essential being, and reflected on our surface experience, animate and fill out the self-image to produce the erroneous feeling of stable, continuous selfhood in our ego.

Conventional psychology looks to the body, heart, and mind to explain our sense of selfhood and aliveness, but this fundamental sense of being transcends and is not reducible to physical sensations, emotions, or mental images. It resides deeper in our spiritual centre. Our uniqueness and most essential identity is our soul, our true individuality, and all theories of the self which leave this out will be lacking. A more comprehensive psychology is necessary, one which is not afraid of all things spiritual lest it appear unscientific, for if spirit is the fundamental nature of reality then both reason and science demand that we pursue this wherever it may lead us.

Conclusion

If, as the highest wisdom of Eastern (and Western) cultures have affirmed for millennia, our psychic centre is an eternal spiritual being, if our frontal organism is only a temporary vesture worn by our deeper soul for this brief lifetime and not our basic identity, this radically changes our conception of who we are. The mystery of the psyche cannot be uncovered through outer means or through an introspection that fails to penetrate past the frontal self. Understanding of the self and psyche must come through a deepening inner vision of which only the spiritual traditions have been capable of so far, an inner sight which extends all the way to our psychic centre.

At present, most human beings are identified with their frontal being. It is in this atmosphere that Western psychology has grown up—a nearly complete identification of the self with the instrumental nature. Though our identification with our frontal self and organism is almost total, most everyone has had some glimpses of the greater possibilities of our inner being. Freeing ourselves from this preoccupation with our frontal nature and finding our true identity is a key goal in integral psychology.

Western psychology helps to identify and engage with our self. It maps the self's powers and realms. It has captured the skeletal outlines of the self, but not its flesh and blood or inner psychic essence. From the perspective of Western psychology the self will always remain a mystery. As Kohut put it:

> The self … is … not knowable in its essence…. We can describe the various cohesive forms in which the self appears, can demonstrate the several constituents that make up the self ... and explain their genesis and functions. We can do all that, but we will still not know the essence of the self as differentiated from its manifestations. (Kohut, 1977, pp. 310–312)

Kohut is correct, so far as he goes, but Indian psychology goes farther. What animates the self, what gives it its distinctive individuality, is not simply the nuclear self (or Jung's 'Self' or gestalt's 'organism' or whatever we choose to call it.) What is possible, even certain at some point in our development, is to directly experience the psychic centre from which our self derives. This is our true individuality, our very soul and deepest self. Integral psychology provides a satisfying answer to the puzzle of selfhood, to what the inmost core of subjectivity is, the sense of being a being. Until we find and experience our psychic centre, we will not know who we most truly are.

If psychology is to be a discipline that goes beyond the surface to include the full range of the psyche, then it must incorporate Eastern discoveries about human consciousness. Acknowledging that the deeper nature of psychic life is ultimately spiritual brings about a paradigm shift that fundamentally changes the field of psychology.

Endnote

1 The intermediate zone means simply a confused condition or passage in which one is getting out of the personal consciousness and opening into the cosmic (cosmic Mind, cosmic vital, cosmic physical, something perhaps of the cosmic higher Mind) without having yet transcended the human mind levels. One is not in possession of or direct contact with the divine Truth *on its own levels*, but one can receive something from them ... the sadhak gets beyond the barriers of his own embodied personal mind he enters into a wide range of experiences which are not the limited solid physical truth of things and not yet either the spiritual truth of things. (Sri Aurobindo, 1972, pp. 1052–1053)

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11

The Sufi path of self-transformation

Bahman A. K. Shirazi

Islam: A brief introduction

Islam is one of the largest and fastest growing world religions. It began with the prophetic vision of Mohammad approximately 1,400 years ago in the Arabian Peninsula and spread at an astonishing rate throughout the Old World. It spread north to Syria, Anatolia, and to the Caucus Mountains and beyond into southeastern Europe. It moved south and west through Egypt and North Africa into Andalusia in Spain. In the northeasterly direction, it spread into Persia and Central Asia and western China, and east into northern India. By sea it spread to the west coast of India and as far as Indonesia and other Southeast Asian island nations.

Islam has thus become an important force not only in terms of religious principles and practices, but also as a vehicle for cultural exchange worldwide. Although some aspects of the original Arab culture such as language, art and architecture greatly influenced other cultures, wherever Islam spread, in turn, local cultures contributed to the fabric of Islam with their own cultural heritage to create a unique expression as well as distinct forms of religious practice and rituals. Today there is a tremendous range of cultural forms unified by the same set of Islamic religious principles and beliefs.

Islam teaches that there's only one God/Ultimate Reality (*Allah*) and nothing is ultimately real but God. God is neither born nor gives birth, that is, it is not a sentient being. It is self-existent and self-sufficient, and all creation depends on God. It permeates all creation, but no single sentient being can be equal to God in entirety. God is both without and within all beings, and thus can be found at the innermost centre of all human beings. In this way, all humans are equal with respect to God. Human beings are uniquely positioned with special potential to consciously experience their unity with the creator. However, many human beings live in a state of sleep-like ignorance (*gheflat*) and are unconscious of their essential oneness with God. Most are born in this state of ignorance, live and die in such a state. However, human beings can exercise their free will and perfect themselves through a process of psychospiritual transformation with distinct stages through which they first use their free will to purify themselves,

and surrender themselves to God's will and ultimately experience God's power, knowledge and beauty directly.

Islam literally means 'peaceful surrender' in Arabic. This refers to the process of yielding of human will to the Divine Will, and ultimately the reconciliation and the unification of the two. The agency of human will is called the *nafs* (self) which is the principle of embodiment of spirit and the immediate experience of the ordinary human being in the world; the *nafs* is of this material world. *Nafs-al-ammarah* (the commanding self) is the human agency of organization, control, volition and action in the world. The human *nafs* is the product of the evolutionary process on Earth and is composed of several evolutionary sub-layers—the inorganic/mineral, the organic/vegetable and the animal layers. However, the journey of the soul does not stop here. When an individual is ready and with God's grace, the journey of spiritual transformation begins and the *nafs* continues to transform first into the 'regretful self', before turning into the 'inspired self', and finally the 'serene/secure self'. The process of spiritual transformation involves seven classical stages—awakening, abstinence, non-attachment, spiritual poverty, patience, God-reliance and joyous certitude.

Islam: Exoteric and esoteric

Sufism has often been referred to as the heart or soul of Islam, or in other words, it is the esoteric dimension or inner territory of Islam. According to Ibn Al-Arabi, the great Andalusian Sufi master, Islam consists of four dimensions or layers. The exoteric dimension, or the outer layer, is known as *sharia* (literally meaning a road). *Sharia* is a set of relatively fixed rules and guidelines for the average Muslim. The *sharia* is a collection of principles and practices that govern the day-to-day life of Muslims. The ordinary Muslim is expected to follow the rules of *sharia* as a driver follows a road without deviating. The basic requirements for all Muslims are—belief in unity of Allah and prophecy of Mohammad as God's messenger, daily prayer, fasting during the month of Ramadhan, charitable acts, and if possible pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime.

The *sharia* is analogous to the crust of the earth or the surface terrain which is solid. Below this terrain is the esoteric realm, or the inner terrain. The next layer is *tarigha*, which literally means a path, like a trail in the forest or in the desert, which is not pre-established and requires the expert knowledge of a guide to traverse. When one enters the *tarigha*, he or she is initiated into a Sufi order with a help of a teacher (*sheikh*) who has experience and knowledge of the path. At this part of the journey the heart of the seeker is full of fiery passions and the journey full of trials and tribulations and involves the purification of the base nature of the *nafs* (embodied self) through the opening of the spiritual heart and the alchemy of transformation. It results in purification and removal of idiosyncratic illusions and development of truth consciousness. The *tarigha* may be likened to the hot magma layer beneath the earth's crust, which is hot and fluid as is the fire in the heart of the seeker.

The third layer is that of a higher spiritual consciousness called *haghighat* (Truth-consciousness). Like the huge solid mantle of the earth, *haghighat* is stable and unshakable faith and perfection of Truth-consciousness. The innermost core of Islam is known as *ma'rifa* (Gnosis), which refers to direct knowledge and love of the Divine. Just as little is known about the core of the Earth, to the seeker this part of the journey is a mere mystery, the secret of all secrets. Only persistence, patience and absolute purity of the heart and soul and total sincerity could bring the seeker into direct union with God consciousness.

Sufism in India

Sufism is the esoteric or inner dimension of Islam, and not a branch of exoteric Islam. Scholars trace the root of the term Sufi to *suf*, a woolen garment worn by some early Sufis. Some argue that the term is related to the Arabic word '*saafi*', meaning purity. Various Sufi orders do not differ with the exoteric traditions, and with one another, in terms of the basic tenets and practices of Islam. Origins of Sufism go back to the 8th century CE, when the first known Sufis lived. Sufi orders began to be established by 12th and 13th centuries, and historically developed more or less as a matter of geographic location as Islam spread throughout the world. Many of the orders were further sub-divided into branches, but most trace their background to the following orders (discussed below)—all of whom trace their heritage ultimately to Prophet Mohammad.

The *Ahmadi* (*Badawi*) and *Burhani* orders were both founded in Egypt. The *Shadhili*, *Sanusi*, and *Tijjani* orders have followers in North Africa, Arabia and Syria. The *Yasawi*, *Mawlawi*, *Jerrahi* and *Bektashi* orders are centred in Turkey. The *Rifai*, *Kubrawi* and *Qadiri* (known as the first Sufi order) orders originate in Mesopotamia. The *Ni'matullahi* and *Owaysi* orders were founded in Iran. The *Suhrawardi* order originated in Iran and spread to India, where it gained more prominence and split into a number of branches. The *Naqshabandi* is a major Sufi order, which became popular in Central Asia, Kurdistan and the Indian subcontinent. The *Chisti* order was founded in India by Khawja Mu'in al-Din Hassan Chisti (1142–1236 CE), whose shrine is visited by millions of people every year. Sufism was brought to Europe and America by the great Indian Sufi master, Hazrat Inayat Khan, in the 1910s and 1920s from the *Chisti* tradition, bringing the message of 'love, harmony, and beauty' to the West.

Islam spread to India as Arabs began settling on the Indian west coast of Kerala as early as the eighth century, which is much earlier than the time of the invasion of India from the north by Mahmud Ghazni in 1001 CE. The development of Sufism in India has a highly distinctive feature, in that Islamic mysticism has been influenced by Indian mysticism throughout the centuries. This amalgamation was so deep that, according to Peter Hardy (1983, p. 41), 'After the death of a great Sufi shaikh, his tomb could become a place of pilgrimage for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.' The greatest confluence of Sufism and Hinduism can be found in the teachings of Meher Baba, who was initiated by five spiritual

masters—two of whom, Hazrat Babajan and Tajuddin Baba, were Sufi masters. In the book, *God Speaks*, Meher Baba (2001), who attempted to unite all the major religions, brings together a comprehensive comparative presentation of Sufism and Hinduism, demonstrating the essential oneness of these two and other major world spiritual traditions.

Essentials of Sufi psychology: *Nafs*, heart and soul

Sufism offers a comprehensive approach to sacred psychology with the ultimate aim of self-knowledge and self-acceptance. The collective experience and knowledge from Sufi practice makes available to us today a thorough understanding of who we are as human beings and what the purpose of our embodied existence here on Earth is. It reveals to us the principal aspects of our nature and a way to transform our selves to become true instruments of manifestation of Divine love, Divine consciousness and Divine action.

Based on the experiences of numerous seekers and masters, Sufism offers one of the most complete road maps for the stages of transformation of consciousness. Each seeker (*salek*) travels a unique path suited to his/her unique personality characteristics and spiritual potential. It is possible, however, to speak of general stages of the transformation of consciousness in terms of the stations of the *nafs* and key challenges and attainments of each stage. The journey from our mundane surface awareness to the depths and heights of self-consciousness involves a process of transformation of personality and consciousness that may be described in terms of seven stages of psychospiritual transformation.

In the context of spiritual growth and development the term transformation may refer to a shift in locus of consciousness, emotional patterns, sense of identity, or an aspect or total configuration of personality, and even physical nature or characteristics. As form expresses essence or function, transformation allows for expression of a truer essence and a new level of functionality. The term 'psychospiritual transformation' highlights the importance of the psychological dimension in the overall process of spiritual transformation. It refers to transformation of consciousness by means of psychological insight. Insight into our emotional nature may help purify our emotions and emotional attachments. This may result in our increased ability to identify with higher spheres of consciousness. Insight into the nature of our phenomenal self or *nafs* is essential in the process of psychospiritual transformation.

Three principal aspects of the human being and their relationship comprise the triadic foundation of Sufi psychology: the *nafs* (self), *ghalb* (heart) and *ruh* (soul). Sufis believe that the spiritual heart is the agent of reconciliation between the physical and metaphysical dimensions of the human being. The spiritual destiny of each human being depends on whether the soul, or *nafs,* becomes the eventual winner of the inner battle (*jihad*) between the tendencies exercised by the *nafs* and the higher qualities of the soul. If the *nafs* dominates, the heart becomes darkened and weakened and ineffective. If the forces of the soul take over the

heart, it becomes transparent and illumined. To know the real depth of the human being means to know intimately and masterfully these three parts and to be able to harmonize and unify them.

Nafs

Nafs is simply the equivalent of the English word 'self'. It has often been translated as 'ego' or 'lower self' both of which are somewhat inaccurate. The term ego, as used in Western psychological discourse, is hardly an equivalent of this term. The ego is generally a hypothetical construct which has a different definition and function in each school of psychology. *Nafs*, however, is not an abstract or theoretical concept—it is a lived, organic reality which could be experienced in day to day life situations. The *nafs* is essentially the embodiment principle and has a unique formation and developmental process in each individual. It is the agency of will in the human being and is the product of bio-psycho-social development. *Nafs* is also not just the lower self, but when qualified, it refers to all stages of self as it undergoes transformation. According to Frager (1999, p. 3), 'in Sufi psychology the self, or *nafs*, is an aspect of the psyche that begins as our worst adversary but can develop into an invaluable tool.'

It is possible to speak of the *nafs* in terms of seven levels. *Nafs al-ammarah*, *nafs-al-lawwamah*, *nafs-al-molhamah* and *nafs-al-motmaenah* refer to the four basic levels of the self. *Nafs-ammarah* (the commanding self), encompasses three levels of the *nafs* prior to the human self in evolutionary terms. These are:

- The mineral/ inorganic self (*nafs al-jamaadi*),
- The vegetable/organic self (*nafs-al-nabaati*), and
- The animal self (*nafs-al-haywaani*)

As the principle of embodiment, the human self is the crown of the evolutionary process, presiding over the animal self, vegetable self and the mineral self.

Table 11.1 summarizes in one glance, the triune nature of human consciousness—the *nafs*, the heart, and the soul in correspondence to seven universal planes of consciousness. These are, in order of higher to lower density—inorganic, vital, mental, rational, intuitive, Truth Consciousness (*Haggh*) and Unitary Consciousness (*Tawheed*). The self (*nafs*) finds multiple expressions corresponding to all of these planes.

The commanding self (*nafs-al-ammarah*), though intelligent in worldly ways, generally lacks spiritual wisdom. According to Shafii (1985, p. 49), 'indulgence in animal desires...and enslavement in habits are the core of ignorance and veiling'. Desires operate at the various sub-levels of self. The mineral-self generates inertia; the vegetative-self creates desires for food and inactivity; and the animal-self is the source of both sexual and destructive tendencies. *Nafs-al-ammarah* seeks material objects, power, and is plagued with various other ego-desires and narcissistic tendencies.

State of Consciousness	Self (*Nafs*)	Heart (*Ghalb*)	Soul (*Ruh*)
inorganic	mineral (*nafs aj-jamaadi*)		mineral
vital+inorganic	vegetable (*nafs al-nabaati*)		vegetable
mental+vital+ inorganic	animal (*nafs al-haywaani*)		animal
rational+mental+ vital+inorganic (intelligence/passions)	personal (*nafs a-ammarah*)	physical heart	human
heart/intuition/ intellect	regretful (*nafs al-lawwamah*)	spiritual heart	individual
truth/inner consciousness	inspired (*nafs al-molhamah*)	inner heart	secret
unity/gnosis/inner-most consciousness	secure/certain (*nafs al-motma-ennah*)	innermost heart	secret of secrets

Table 11.1: Seven planes of consciousness and the corresponding stations of the self, heart and soul.

The *nafs* often craves worldly objects and ignores the wisdom of the heart which is the medium of transmission of the knowledge of the soul. The *nafs* needs spiritual guidance to awaken to its spiritual potential from the state of sleep-like ignorance (*gheflat*). In Sufi practice, it has long been known that spiritual transformation necessitates opening of the heart as the first order of the work. Through the wisdom of an open heart, an individual is capable of self-love and self-compassion, qualities that are crucial to a non-judgmental approach to self-knowledge.

Heart

Sufism has frequently been referred to as the path of the heart. This is true, and a distinctive way of referring to this great tradition, but it is not the whole truth. Sufism has also developed one of the most complete teachings and practices for understanding and knowing the self, its growth and evolution in the context of the human psychospiritual developmental process. While focusing on the *nafs* and its relationship to the heart, Sufism never loses sight of the presence of the soul and its ultimate role in the human destiny. To make real progress in self-knowledge, one must encounter and discover the *nafs*, but the *nafs*, being extremely intelligent, is never capable of the kind of sincerity needed to see through its own makeup. The heart is the wisest place to start. Javad Nurbakhsh (1992, p. 71) writes:

> The heart is a city between the domain of Unity (spirit, *ruh*) and the land of multiplicity (*nafs*). If the heart snaps the cord linking it with the *nafs*, it falls under the sway of the spirit; that is to say, it becomes heart in the true sense of the word, polished clean of the corrosion of multiplicity. On the other hand, if the heart becomes dominated by the *nafs*, it becomes darkened by the tarnish of the *nafs*' multiplicity, taking on its hue.

Four stations of the heart have been identified by the Sufi master Tirmidhi—the breast or physical heart, the spiritual heart, the inner heart and the innermost heart (see Table 11.1). The breast or the physical heart corresponds to the commanding self (*nafs al-ammarah*), and its function is to purify the physical body by constantly circulating and purifying the blood. It is also known as the seat of duality of good and evil; and the moral conflict between the two. The spiritual heart, which is on a subtle plane, corresponds to the regretful self (*nafs al-lawwamah*). Its function is to purify unwholesome states of mind and emotions by providing their antidote (such as loving-kindness for anger). Opening of the spiritual heart is paramount to spiritual progress as ignorance of the *nafs* perpetually generates negative energies that can darken our consciousness.

It is a priority for Sufis to awaken their spiritual heart which needs to be integrated with the *nafs*. An open heart provides a loving and forgiving platform from which one can contemplate and discover the nature of our *nafs*. It will facilitate the transition from *nafs al-ammarah* to *nafs al-lawwamah* (the regretful *nafs*). As the *nafs* transitions to the stage of *nafs al-molhamah* (the inspired *nafs*), the heart arrives at another more subtle station, the inner heart. Finally, the heart is experienced at the deepest level of consciousness, the innermost heart, as the *nafs* transitions to its final station, the certain, serene and secure *nafs* (*nafs-al-motma'ennah*). Meher Baba (2000, p. 14) asserts:

> Open your heart by weeding out all desires and by harbouring only one longing—the longing for union with the ultimate Reality. The ultimate Reality is not to be sought in the changing things of the external environment but in one's own being. Every time your soul intends to enter your human heart, it finds the door locked and the inside too full of desires. Do not keep the doors of your heart closed. Everywhere there is the source of abiding bliss, and yet all are miserable because of desires born of ignorance. The goal of lasting happiness shines forth fully only when the limited ego, with all its desires, finds its complete and final extinction.

The role of the heart in the overall process of psychospiritual transformation is cardinal, as the heart is the reconciler of material and spiritual realities, and the gateway to the soul and to the final stations of consciousness. In Sufi practice the initial goal is to open the seeker's heart. The open heart first helps to transcend, and then, transform the *nafs*. As the *nafs* transforms, it no longer acts as a separative agent, but rather cooperates with further transformation of consciousness. Desires of the *nafs* give way to the desires of the heart, and finally there remains only one desire—desire to know God.

Soul

Hazrat Inayat Khan (1972b, p. 153) wrote, 'It is the coming of the soul from its original place to manifestation and its returning again from manifestation to its original condition that makes life's journey.' According to Prophet Mohammad, human beings are the highest of creation. Each human being is a microcosmic expression of the macrocosm.

> It does not require a large eye to see a large mountain. The reason is that though the eye is small, the soul which sees through it is greater and vaster than all the things which it perceives. In fact it is so great that it includes all objects, however large or numerous, within itself. Or it is not so much that you are within the cosmos as that the cosmos is within you. (Meher Baba, 1974, p. 43)

The human soul (*ruh*) is the innermost dimension (*baatin*) of the human being and is hidden to the immediate consciousness of the ordinary individual as our surface consciousness (*zaaher*) is dominated by the activities of the *nafs*. All souls are formless and seek experience and expression as they enter the various planes of consciousness (Table 11.1). Hazrat Inayat Khan (1972a, p. 127) reveals that 'the soul is a current, yet one unlike the electric current we know on this physical plane, different from its power and phenomena; a current which is beyond time and space; a current which runs through all the planes of life.' Different souls, though identical in origin, are different in their experience and their state of consciousness. The ascent of the soul through various planes of consciousness is called transmigration or metempsychosis (*tanaasukh*).

When the soul is experiencing the inorganic state of consciousness (stone or metal), it is referred to as the mineral-soul or state of mineral selfhood and so on, as detailed in Table1. In the fourth stage after mineral, vegetable and animal stages, the human form is accomplished, which is the end result of the evolutionary process. The commanding self (*nafs-al-ammarah*) associated with this level is not yet spiritually awakened and is full of blemishes, impurities and unwholesome traits such as hypocrisy, selfishness, delusions, spite, envy and cruelty. The behaviours committed by the *nafs* stem from its own many layers of identity and identification—physical, emotional, mental, familial, social, professional, racial, national and historical dimensions of identity. All of the pre-human and human layers of *nafs* are considered veils or covers of the true self. Self-realization requires a gradual disidentification with, or unveiling of, all these conditioned identities to reveal the innermost layer, the true Divine Self.

It is at the next level when the spiritual heart is opened that the soul experiences wholeness and true individuality. The next two stations of the soul are referred to as the 'secret', and the 'secret of secrets', which are unknowable to the ordinary mind and are marked by oneness with Ultimate Truth and Unity with God or the over-soul, respectively. In its origin the individual soul is part of the over-soul or God, yet it is not conscious of its identity with God. Through its journey the soul moves through the various states of consciousness and experiences its identity with the various states.

> The homeward journey of the soul consists in freeing itself from the illusion of being identical with its bodies—gross, subtle, and mental. When the attention of the soul turns toward Self-knowledge and Self-realization, there is a gradual loosening and disappearance of the *sanskaras* that keep consciousness turned towards the phenomenal world. Disappearance of the *sanskaras* proceeds side by side with piercing through the veil of cosmic Illusion, and the soul not only begins to transcend the different states of the phenomenal world but also to know itself as different from its bodies. The spiritual path begins when the soul tries to find itself and turns its full consciousness toward Truth (God). (Meher Baba, 2000, pp. 225–226)

The term *saṁskāra* refers to mental impressions that are acquired through the mind and the senses associated with *nafs* and embodied existence. These impressions create numerous veils of illusion that keep human beings in the state of *gheflat* or sleep-like ignorance and unconsciousness. According to a traditional saying, 'there are seventy veils between the human being and God, yet none between God and the human being'. In Sufi practice the goal is to open the seeker's heart, which is the gateway to the soul. The open heart first helps to transcend and then transform the *nafs*. As the *nafs* transforms, it no longer acts as a divisive agent, but rather cooperates with further transformation of consciousness.

The journey

Understanding the nature of the *nafs* and the modifications it undergoes in the process of psychospiritual transformation into the cosmic self, is at the core of the teachings in the Sufi tradition. Sufi practice begins with the first stage of psychospiritual transformation, spiritual awakening. Once the first stage is perfected (as demonstrated by a lack of recourse to the previous tendencies of the *naf*s), *nafs-al-ammarah* undergoes a gradual process of transformation known as *fana*, which means ego-annihilation or loss of self-centred personality characteristics.

As *nafs-al-ammarah* becomes modified and transformed, a new self is experienced. This is called *nafs-al-lawwama*. The term '*lawwama*' literally means 'blaming' or 'accusing'. *Nafs-al-lawwama* is perhaps best described (in functional terms) as self-in-transition, or regretful self. Regret is the result of the new consciousness, which reveals the imperfections of the *nafs* and the futility of its unconscious ways of being in the world. Many refined and mature human beings, whether Sufis or not, manifest the characteristics of *nafs-al-lawwama*, both in their inner life and outward behaviour. Such persons are decreasingly influenced by the tendencies of *nafs-al-ammarah*, and increasingly show the signs of higher emotions and subtler behaviours. A Sufi practitioner in the second stage, characterized by 'abstinence', actively avoids all forms of inferior impulses and tendencies by observing the ethical codes of the discipline (*adab*) until eventually the third stage, or 'non-attachment', is mastered.

It is crucial to distinguish abstinence (detachment) from non-attachment. While abstinence is required as an initial step, it does not automatically lead to

non-attachment as the roots of craving still persist. Over-emphasis on abstinence may result in lopsided development, extreme asceticism and the development of a pious self which becomes judgmental and critical of others, which further separates one from the others. Sufism prescribes modesty in abstinence only with the goal of de-conditioning the *nafs* from its original habits and addictions.

By means of successive passages into the next two stages, 'spiritual poverty', during which the heart is perfectly purified and 'patience', longing for Divine grace, the practitioner attains the sixth stage, referred to as 'self-surrender', or 'reliance on God', through completion of which all tendencies of *nafs-al-ammarah* are eradicated at the root. Completion of the sixth stage also marks the cessation of all effort on the part of the individual. Beyond this point experiences of cosmic self and universal consciousness occur spontaneously, or by Divine grace. At the seventh and last stage, called 'contentment', the self takes on its final mode, *nafs-al-motma'enna*, which is characterized by joyful satisfaction and removal of all doubts.

Fana, or ego-annihilation, is also described in terms of a parallel process for an initiated seeker—annihilation of the ego first in the *sheikh* or teacher, and then in the Prophet Mohammad, and eventually in God or cosmic consciousness. At first a disciple undergoes a process of loss of self-identity through identification with the qualities of his or her teacher. Sufi practice, like those of other traditions, is best mastered under the guidance of a teacher. Just as ordinarily a lover at first loses his or her identity in that of the beloved, a sincere disciple is so impressed by the love and characteristics of a teacher that through observation and identification with the *sheikh* he or she becomes immersed in the virtues of the teacher. The *sheikh*, in the beginning, acts as a mirror through which the disciple gains insight into his or her characteristics of personality. Slowly the disciple observes the many virtuous qualities of the teacher and cultivates them.

If the teacher happens to be a Perfect Master, then he or she reflects the ninety-nine attributes of the Prophet Mohammad, who is known to the Sufis as a perfected human being (*ensan-al-kaamel*). The attributes of the Prophet are themselves nothing but the reflection of the ninety-nine attributes of Allah, or God. These ninety-nine perfections are the object of contemplation by Sufis at various stages of the practice. The practices of contemplation are generally called *zikar* (*dhikr*), and they take the form of chanting, movement or mediation exercises. Nurbakhsh (1990, p. 5) summarized the relationship between *dhikr* and self-development in the following way:

> ... *dhikr* is considered to be like a torrent which in addition to eliminating the undesirable qualities of the disciple and substituting Divine Attributes for them, in the final analysis effaces the individual ego in such a way that not a trace of the 'I' remains. This is the end of the Tarigha and the beginning of the sea of annihilation or *fana*.

According to Nurbakhsh (1990, p. 5), '...the goal of Sufism is knowledge of absolute reality, not as learned men explain it to us through logic and demonstrations but as it is in itself. This knowledge can be attained only by the "eye of the heart", that is, by means of illumination and contemplation'. Contemplation on Divine

attributes is the final means of self-purification. From the Sufi point of view a perfected individual is one who has escaped the domination of *nafs-al-ammarah*.

As one approaches perfection, the *nafs* makes its final attempts to take control of the psyche. These re-appearances, despite their decreasing frequency, may be immensely difficult to withstand. That is why, until the final illumination, a certain degree of doubt as to the full annihilation of *nafs-al-ammarah* remains in the mind of the (by now) saint undergoing final transformation.

With the eventual disappearance of doubt the sixth stage of Sufi practice (self-surrender) is completed, and the last stage (contentment/joy) is attained. At this point the individual free-will is replaced by Divine Will. As mentioned earlier, the process of annihilation of the ego is known as *fana*. It takes place through successive stages of annihilation of the ego in the teacher (*fana-fe'sheikh*), in the Prophet (*fana-fe'rasul*), and in God (*fana-fe'llah*). However, *fana* has another process complementary to it, *baqa*. As Nurbakhsh (1990, p. 10) explained:

> Baqa consists of subsistence in God and is realized when God gives a new will to the disciple directly from himself, in order to replace that which had become annihilated in the course of the path... At this very advanced stage God does not veil the world from the Sufi, nor does the world veil God; no sort of separation exists any longer and duality is transformed into Unity.

Conclusion

This chapter was an attempt to provide a brief overview of Islam and its mystical dimension, Sufism. Emphasis was given to the psychological aspects of the process of spiritual transformation and the associated processes and stages of self-transformation merely in an outline fashion. There is much more that can be said about all the issues that were raised in this limited space. It is important to remember, however, that all that can be said in this manner makes only a map; the territory is the actual experience of the seeker and is always a unique process that cannot be moulded into any model or description however sophisticated. It is hoped that the map will simply provide an inspiration for the seeker of God.

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12

Being an authentic self: Some insights from the lives of Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi

Shivantika Sharad[1]

> You must learn to act always from within—from your inner being.... The outer should be a mere instrument and should not be allowed at all to compel or dictate your speech, thought or action.
>
> Sri Aurobindo (1970a, Part 2, pp. 691–692)

The *Upaniṣadic* realization that what is natural is also beautiful and true (*satyam*, *śivam*, *sundaram*) implies that beauty and truth cannot be artificially made or fabricated. This ideal implies an inherent design in which these three always exist as aspects of a true and integral self. But their overt manifestation is often blocked or distorted by our misinterpretations. Unfortunately, contemporary psychological discourse on the nature of the self tends to focus on constructions anchored in the external physical world, which is increasingly governed by media and market driven forces rather than our own experiences. The perennial task of carving out one's existence has become increasingly knotty in the technology-based world of today. The experience of an authentic or true self has become inextricably linked to fulfilling one's multiple roles. Experiencing incongruities and discontinuities while negotiating the multiplicity of selves and the diversity of roles is not an uncommon phenomenon. A failure to adequately integrate the personality results in deleterious consequences for both the individual (for example, stresses, conflicts, defences, tensions) and society. It has become difficult for us to recognize our true selves and to decipher the meaning of our existence in this world. Within this experiential context the quest for authenticity should occupy a central place in contemporary life. In this chapter we will examine the construct of authenticity in the literature and situate it within the context of Indian thought. An attempt is also made to bring out the features of authenticity as a quality of lived experience. To this end the life stories of Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi were analyzed.

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Following that, a model of authenticity drawn from the Indian tradition will be suggested.

Authenticity in psychology and contemporary life

The study of authenticity assumes greater relevance in contemporary societies characterized by chaos and flux, where everything including relationships, institutions, and symbols are undergoing a sea change. The metaphors of 'business', 'contract', 'exchange', and 'profit' dominate today's discourse. Change is inevitable, and cuts both ways, but change manifesting as technological development and progress is often accompanied by a sense of loss. Feelings of uprootedness and a sense of alienation can dominate our lives. We have severed ties not only with our true selves but also with others in the social world. We are becoming unanchored, and deprived of a sense of meaning and direction. This state of affairs demands that we examine the nature and value of being an authentic self.

Interestingly, it seems that authenticity has not been adequately researched or discussed in mainstream psychology. There seems to be less focus on the presence of authenticity within clinical, developmental and social psychological research literature than on its absence. Themes which have captured attention are those that focus on human frailties and weaknesses, such as self-monitoring, self-presentation, social desirability, faking, compliance and self-deception, (Snyder, 1974, 1987; Schlenker, 1980; Leary, 1995). Also, a number of approaches like ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), social constructionism (Gergen, 1985; Shotter, 1993), dramaturgical perspectives (Goffman, 1959) and various post-modern perspectives question the possibility of a stable and continuous notion of self and identity. As Gergen (1990) notes, we play 'such a variety of roles that the very concept of an "authentic self" with knowable characteristics recedes from view' (p. 228). The post-modern person is characterized by a fluctuating, ever changing identity (described as *protean man* by Lifton, 1993), independent of all identifiable truth-seeking perspectives and unaccountable for anything (Rosenau, 1992). Interestingly an integrated self remains one of the major therapeutic goals of clinical work and is a major concern in the areas of socialization and education.

The English word 'authenticity' has been derived from the Greek word '*authentes*' meaning author. It indicates a person who scripts his own life story, who rules or is the master, that is, a person who is in charge of the self. This requires being the author of one's own destiny, and following a self-directed course in life, rather than passively submitting to the external pressures or blind obedience to the demands and expectations of others (see Harter, 2002). The dictionary meaning of 'authentic' is 'genuine, authoritative, true, and of established credibility' (Chambers Concise Dictionary, 1992). Authentic is 'known to be real and genuine and not a copy; true and accurate; made to be exactly the same as original' (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2004).

Instead of following the lead of the public or the crowd (Kierkegaard, 1846) or living immersed in the 'they' (Heidegger, 1927/1962) in an unthinking, passive

manner, an authentic person follows his or her own guiding principles. This requires complete resonance with one's true self and following the inner voice. Heidegger (1931–1932) described authenticity as that mode of human existence in which the person 'appropriates' himself, or comes to himself and can be himself. 'Coming to himself' implies an ongoing journey of self-realization and self-discovery, the process of *becoming* and establishing relations with one's true self. It involves *owning* one's attributes (for example, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, values, needs, wants, preferences, actions, intentions) and standing by what one recognizes as belonging to oneself. The act of owning incorporates the sense of responsibility for one's entire being. Victor Frankl (1984, p. 131) sees in *responsibleness* the very essence of human existence.

The other aspect of authenticity, that is, 'being your self' would imply the various behavioural manifestations of the true self. In 'being your self' there is no space for deception. This requires a deep sense of conviction and determination. Being oneself implies self-transparency and requires self-awareness and self-knowledge. Clearly such self-transparency constitutes a necessary condition for rational self-autonomy, moral responsibility, and freedom.

Carl Rogers (1969, p. 228) uses the term *congruence*, which results when the 'experiencing of this moment is present in my awareness and when what is present in my awareness is present in my communication, then each of these three levels matches or is congruent. At such moments, I am integrated or whole.' Equating *congruence* with *transparency* he writes, 'genuineness, realness or congruence ... means that the therapist is openly being the feelings and attitudes that are flowing within at the moment ... the therapist makes himself or herself transparent to the client' (Rogers, 1980, pp. 115–116). Rogers' term congruence is closely related to authenticity.

The developmental precursors to authenticity, that is, the role of early childhood experiences and parenting in nurturing authenticity, can be recognized in the work of Carl Rogers, Karen Horney and D. W. Winnicot. Horney's work centres on a basic belief that there is an inner essence of our being that is the source of our growth and self-realization. This essence she called the real self (Morvay, 1999). Horney (1950, p. 17) writes, 'The human individual, given a chance, tends to develop his particular human potentialities. He will develop then the unique alive forces of his real self: the clarity and depth of his feeling, thoughts, wishes, interests; the ability to tap his own resources, the strength of his will power ... the faculty to express himself and to relate himself to others with his spontaneous feelings. All this in time enables him to find his set of values and his aims in life.'

Winnicott (1960, p. 145) likens the true self to the 'spontaneous gesture' (of the infant) and views it as the foundation of all subsequent healthy living. For Winnicot, parents who are intrusively over-involved with their young child foster the development of a false self based upon compliance. He says about the false self, 'This compliance, on the part of the infant, is the earliest stage of the false self.' As such, personal representations of preferences, thoughts, wishes, needs, and emotions may be stifled to comply with parental demands. As Winnicot (1960, p. 148)

says, 'Only the True Self can be creative … can feel real … the existence of a False Self results in a feeling unreal or a sense of futility.' And so the notion of the self as the centre of spontaneity that has the 'experience of aliveness' constitutes the heart of authenticity. However, this ability to enact such spontaneous gestures is contingent on the responsiveness of the 'good-enough mother' within an appropriate 'holding environment'.

For Sartre (1969), persons enjoy a special kind of agency, wherein the ultimate determinants of action and identity are their own choices for which they are endowed with freedom. He equates authenticity with *good faith*, and as long as they consciously choose and accept full responsibility for their actions, they are in good faith. Sartre's notion of *bad faith* involves renunciation of human freedom in the service of self-deception. Sartre views the whole life (identity) of an individual as expressing an original project (the project to be) that unfolds through time, and not something which is ready-made. People create meaning by moving away from 'bad faith' (trying to become identified with their roles or temperaments) and creating their own comprehensive fundamental projects.

Maslow (1968) suggests that authenticity occurs when individuals discover their true inner nature by sufficiently satisfying higher order psychological needs or 'being' needs. Focusing on growth-oriented needs presumably results in fuller knowledge and acceptance of one's true or intrinsic nature, which then moves one further on the path toward self-actualization.

The notion of a true/real self is central in all these writings. However, the authors do not make a clear distinction between self and ego, and at times the ego is confused with the true self. The presence of an encompassing (or spiritual) self is also not asserted in most of these works. Their concept of self is very limited and is confined to the boundaries of ego functioning. For instance, while Rogers spoke about the built-in motivation to develop our potential to the fullest extent, his work is primarily limited to the apparent aspects of existence, and does not adequately address the higher levels of existence. The being of a person is defined by the possibilities, which are infinite. An authentic life would require us to make the choices to transform these possibilities into reality. However, the humanistic and existentialist schools, being philosophies of human finiteness do not deal with this issue. Also, the way these theorists have conceptualized authenticity and self-growth, it might appear to some readers as endorsing the values of individualism. There is little reference to the social, ecological and transcendental dimensions of human existence in most of these writings. This view has, however, been central to the development of both psychological theory and clinical practice, as well as the broader domain of helping relationships. The self-contained model of man implicit in these writings does not situate human experience in a relational framework and therefore offers only a limited perspective.

The Indian perspective on authenticity

Unlike the Western approach, the Indian perspective attends to the complexities

of the multi-layered structure of being, without taking recourse to reductionism. The holistic view present in diverse schools of Indian thought is inspired by an understanding of transcendence which encompasses various domains of life. The authentic choice in the Indian thought system is not centred on death, but towards the realization of the true Self and liberation. The Indian tradition is rooted in a deep awareness of an implicit and underlying continuity and connectedness across various life forms throughout the universe. It maintains that the striving to be authentic enhances and facilitates self-expansion/self-transcendence. It incorporates love and respect for others and is inclusive. It emphasizes the notion of Self as a ground for existence. Within this paradigm a search for true or authentic self is held to be the prime goal of human life. It is held that one may renounce or sacrifice this world for *ātman* (*ātmārthaṃ pṛthivīṃ tyajet*).

At the heart of Indian thought is the concept of *brahman*. At the core of our being, in the innermost sheath of our existence, lies the all-pervading *brahman*, an Absolute that makes us what we are. Leading an authentic life implies a striving for relationship with one's true Self (*brahman*), and realizing all the possibilities of our true nature. Authenticity, therefore, becomes the realization of our oneness with the transcendent and cosmic Divine, and with all beings. As Sri Aurobindo (1970c, p. 726) observes, 'to arrive at freedom, mastery and perfection we have to get back to the real self and soul within and arrive too thereby at our true relations with our own and with universal nature.'

Becoming authentic can also be viewed as the psychic's coming to the front, as described by Sri Aurobindo (1970a, Part 4, p. 1097):

> The psychic ordinarily is deep within.... By coming forward is meant that it comes from behind the veil, its presence is felt already in the waking daily consciousness, its influence fills, dominates, transforms the mind and vital and their movements, even the physical. One is aware of one's soul, feels the psychic to be one's true being, the mind and the rest begin to be only instruments of the inmost within us.

The psychic being is the individualized soul developed by the psychic essence, in the process of evolution. When the psyche, a spark of the Divine which is present in all life and matter, begins to develop an individuality in the course of evolution, that psychic individuality is called the psychic being (Dalal, 1989, p. 205). Psychic essence is the divine essence in the individual. This persistent soul existence is the real individuality which stands behind the constant mutations of the structure we call personality (Dalal, 2001). It is the inmost soul being; a portion of the Divine within us, and it uses the mind, vital and the body as instruments for growth and experience. As the psychic being grows through *sādhanā*, it is no longer veiled by mind, vital and body, and instead comes forward and dominates the mind, life and body. In the words of Sri Aurobindo (1970a, Part 4, p. 1605):

> As this experience grows it manifests a developing psychic personality which insisting always on the good, true and beautiful, finally becomes ready and strong enough to turn the nature towards the Divine.

The meaning and nature of psychic being can be elucidated, with the help of some excerpts from Sri Aurobindo's writings:

> It is this secret psychic entity which is the true original Conscience in us deeper than the constructed and conventional conscience of the moralist, for it is this which points always towards Truth and Right and Beauty, towards Love and Harmony and all that is a divine possibility in us, and persists till these things become the major need of our nature (1970b, p. 226).

> Always, when the soul is in front, one gets the right guidance from within as to what is to be done, what avoided, what is the wrong thing or the true thing in thought, feeling, action. But this inner intimation emerges in proportion as the consciousness grows more and more pure (1970a, Part 3, p. 903).

> It is by the coming forward of this true monarch and his taking up of the reins of government that there can take place a real harmonisation of our being and our life (1970b, p. 900).

In psychic being (here being is used as a verb) is the complete authentic existence. We all have the potential for finding the psychic being and bringing it to the front of the consciousness where it can organize and harmonize all the parts of the being. The capability for this can be nurtured through the practice of yoga. Sri Aurobindo (1970a, Part 1, p. 288) says,

> In its origin it [psychic] is the nucleus pregnant with divine possibilities that supports this lower triple manifestation of mind, life and body.

For an authentic person, mind, life (desires, energy) and body become pure instruments of true Self-expression. Thoughts, emotions and actions are in synchrony with one another, and in tune with the true Self. When the psychic being is at the front of the consciousness the individual is in a state of 'flow', without conflict or impediment in uniting with the Divine. He is natural and spontaneous, and without pretension. Treading the path of self-realization and seeking oneness with the Divine (*brahman*) brings with it experiences of joy, peace, compassion, love and liberation, all manifestations of the true Self.

Within this perspective, an authentic person does not consider his limited, mind-made self to be all, but only a wave of 'becoming' thrown up from the sea of its 'being'. The authentic person perceives his true self to be one with the Transcendent, and no longer takes its constructed individuality as anything more than a formation for world experience (Dalal, 2001).

Thus the very first step towards authenticity is '…to accept the fact that this outer consciousness is not one's soul, not oneself, not the real person, but only a temporary formation on the surface for the purposes of the surface play. The soul, the person is within, not on the surface—the outer personality is the person only in the first sense of the Latin word *persona* which meant originally a mask.' (Sri Aurobindo, 1970a, Part 1, pp. 304–305). Leading an authentic life requires us to retrieve our true selves, and be released from the bondage of ego.

Authenticity in action: Exploring through the lives of authentic people

To share insights from the Indian tradition we will focus on two modern Indian visionaries—Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. These remarkable men demonstrated the power of an authentic life in many ways. Sri Aurobindo was a spiritual master and Gandhi was a spiritual leader. Both succeeded in transforming themselves in order to achieve a greater, selfless purpose.

The psychic being is always evolving. One can only strive to understand its progressive growth and influence through the study of life stories as a whole. But it would be a very limited and partial attempt. Also the *sādhanā* of Sri Aurobindo had taken him far beyond the psychic realization, and his life reflects the attainment of the highest reaches of consciousness. To understand the nature of authenticity with this perspective, an analysis of the life stories of Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi was carried out.

Aurobindo Ghosh (1872–1950) is known both as a freedom fighter and a great thinker. A seer, poet, and Indian nationalist, Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta (Bengal) in an educated family. His father, a doctor, sent him to England to be educated when he was seven, and he spent fourteen years there. After returning to India in 1893, he participated in India's freedom struggle for a few years, and then went on to Pondicherry for pursuing his spiritual quest, where he spent the rest of his life doing *yoga sādhanā*, exploring the various levels of consciousness and trying to bring the supramental consciousness into earth consciousness. He developed a system of *yoga* that he called Integral Yoga, and wrote a number of books on Indian philosophy and thought.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948), one of the most respected spiritual and political leaders of the 1900s, was born on October 2, 1869 in Porbandar (Gujarat), India. His father was a Prime Minister in Porbandar, and later in Rajkot. He went to London to study law. In 1893, he went to South Africa and stayed there for 21 years working to secure rights for Indian people. It was there that he developed his creed of passive resistance against injustice, *satyāgraha* (truth force), based on truth and non-violence. Before he returned to India in 1915, he had radically changed the lives of Indians living in South Africa. Gandhi helped free India from British rule through nonviolent resistance, and is honoured by his people as the father of the Indian Nation. Indians call Gandhi *Mahatma*, meaning *Great Soul*.

The focus of this section is to chart out certain psychological attributes and experiences associated with these authentic people who strived for unity with the Divine, mapping the experiential terrains of their lives. For this purpose texts from Sri Aurobindo's *On Himself* (*OH*) and his biography by Nirodbaran (1990) *Sri Aurobindo for All Ages* (*SAFAA*) and from Gandhiji's autobiography, *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (1927) are used. Overall, it can be seen as an endeavour to identify the elements of authenticity in these lives.

The texts were analyzed with a qualitative orientation and themes were identified. These two individuals were contemporaries and remarkable representatives of Indian culture. Patterns emerge from these two stories unfolding during the

same historical period. The analyses yielded six major themes as detailed below. Here onwards Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi have been addressed through the initials SA and MG respectively.

Self-transformation from ordinariness to extra-ordinariness: A journey from Aurobindo Ackroyd Ghose to *Maharṣi* Sri Aurobindo, from Mohan Das Gandhi to *Mahātmā.*

In this section we have analysed the journeys of these spiritual seekers, and explored the process of how they transformed their ordinary lives into the extraordinary. Sri Aurobindo was a strong seeker of truth since his initial years. Transcending human imperfections he transformed his life into an epitome of truth, peace and compassion.

> In those days I was not particular about telling the truth always and I was a bit of a coward. Nobody could imagine that I could face the gallows or carry on a revolutionary movement. In my case it was all human imperfection with which I had to start … (SAFAA, p. 12).

SA's journey was more inner than outer. In his own words:

> … neither you nor anyone else knows anything at all of my life; it has not been on the surface for men to see (OH, p. 378).

On the other hand, Gandhi lived quite an active social life. The ordinariness in Gandhi during his early years is reflected in his accounts of what he calls '*his failings*', '*tragedy*' and '*shame*'. These include his friendship with a person who instigates him into meat-eating (a taboo for *Vaiṣnavas*); his brothel visit; his suspicions about his wife; stealing, smoking, lying; failure to practise sexual restraint, and others. However what sets MG apart was his 'awareness' of these failings. As he mentions at different points in his biography:

> Moreover, I was a coward (p. 17).
>
> It took me long to get free from the shackles of lust, and I had to pass through many ordeals before I could overcome it (p. 26).
>
> I knew I was lying … to my mother (p. 20).

There were many such moments of weakness in MG's life. However after each such experience he was engulfed by guilt, and absorbed in introspection, and the desire for atonement. This capacity—to realize his mistakes and reflect on his experiences—always helped him to reposition himself.

Extra-ordinariness: Quest for truth, self-awakening, transformation

Both SA and MG constantly *sought self-growth and evolution*. Their lives bear witness to the infinite possibilities within human beings for self-actualization and self-realization. Both these spiritual masters had the capacity for self-reflection and

introspection, which aided them in following the path towards self-realization and seeking the Divine.

> I must somehow see God … However arduous the way, I am determined to follow that path (SAFAA, p. 53).

> I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after Him. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest (MG, p. xi).

Their extra-ordinariness was also manifested in *questioning the status quo* and trying to change the prevailing situation. They were guided by super-ordinate ideals, rather than being content with the mundane. In this context, SA's description of our mother-country India and his call to the people of India to work for her freedom is extremely relevant:

> Other people look upon the country as an inert piece of matter … to me She is the Mother. I adore Her, worship Her (SAFAA, p. 53).

So rather than feeling settled with the status quo, SA never shied away from taking risks in life.

> Poverty has never had any terror for me nor is it an incentive … I left my very safe and 'handsome' Baroda position without any need to do it and then I gave up also the Rupees 150 of National College Principalship leaving myself with nothing to live on … (OH, p. 357).

> That starting and carrying on for ten years and more a revolutionary movement for independence without means and in a country wholly unprepared for it is … living dangerously (OH, p. 357).

Both SA and MG had within them sincere and strong *aspiration to seek the Truth*, and that is what made them move ahead with their quest.

> But one thing took deep root in me—the conviction that morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality. Truth became my sole objective. It began to grow in magnitude everyday and my definition of it also has been ever widening (MG, p. 29).

At the tender age of seven, MG was deeply influenced by Śravaṇa and Hariśchandra, symbols of dutifulness and truth respectively in the Indian mythology.

> The book (Shravana Pitribhakti Nataka) and the picture (of Sharavana, carrying by means of slings fitted for his shoulders, his blind parents on a pilgrimage) left an indelible impression on my mind.
>
> To follow truth and to go through all the ordeals Harishchandra went through was the one ideal it inspired in me…. Still both Harishchandra and Shravana are living realities for me (p. 6).

Metamorphosis: The process of transformation

SA had unusual experiences since his childhood. Regarding an experience when he was twelve or thirteen he said:

> I was extremely selfish and then something came upon me and I felt I ought to give up selfishness. I tried in my own way—of course imperfectly—to put it into practice. But that was a sort of turning point in my inner life (SAFAA, p. 10).

For SA it was his *yoga sādhana* that catalyzed the metamorphosis, which was completely internal.

> I came away (from politics) because I did not want anything to interfere with my yoga and because I got a very distinct adesa in the matter (OH, p. 55).

> Do you think that Buddha or Confucius or myself were born with a prevision that they or I would take to the spiritual life? So long as one is in the ordinary consciousness, one lives the ordinary life. When the awakening and the new consciousness come, one leaves it (OH, p. 75).

> I have been so absorbed in my Sadhana that contact with the outside world has till lately been reduced to minimum (OH, p. 436).

In the life of MG, the quest for truth was manifested through various experiments that he carried out with non-violence, celibacy, vegetarianism and other principles of conduct, including Satyagraha. His decision to come back to South Africa and fight for the cause of Indians there, the Phoenix settlement, his water and earth treatment, experiments in dietetics, self-restraint, fasting etc.—all these activities and experiments are not beyond the purview of human capacity, but they are not something everyone can have the courage to do. MG had that courage and aspiration to seek truth and self-purification in whatever he did.

> The experiences and experiments have sustained me and given me great joy (p. 420).

> He who would go for novel experiments must begin with himself. That leads to quicker discovery of truth, and God always protects the honest experimenter (p. 257).

Acts of confession hold great significance in shaping MG's life. It can be seen throughout his life that he was peculiarly fond of making confessions, and did so at many critical points in his life. These may have been his way of accepting parts of himself by confessing things in public when he felt that he was not being true to himself or had in some way violated the two great values of *ahiṁsā* (non-violence) and *satya* (truth). The essence of any act of confession is 'acceptance or owning' one's mistakes or weaknesses, done with a sense of repentance. Through these confessions MG was able to overcome his initial failings and gradually develop a strong commitment for truth. For example, here is his disclosure of stealing to his father:

> But I felt that the risk should be taken; that there could not be a cleansing without confession. I decided at last to write out the confession, to submit it to my father, and ask his forgiveness … I also pledged myself never to steal in future (p. 23).

> A clear confession, combined with a promise never to commit the sin again, when offered before one who has the right to receive it, is the purest form of repentance (p. 24).

Other aspects of MG's life that contributed to his transformation from ordinariness to extra-ordinariness were his ability to learn from experience and his openness to new experience.

> There was also the tempting opportunity of seeing a new country, and of having new experience (p. 85).

The transformation in MG was also marked by a change *from an outer to inner orientation*. Initially in India, MG chose to abstain from meat eating because of his parents who were staunch *Vaiṣnavas* and abhorred meat eating, and not because of his own preference. He said to himself:

> In their lifetime, therefore, meat eating must be out of the question. When they are no more, and I have found my freedom, I will eat meat openly … I abjured meat out of the purity of my desire not to lie to my parents (p. 20).

However, later on after reading Salt's *Plea for Vegetarianism*, MG's stance regarding not eating meat changed:

> From the date of reading this book, I may claim to have become a vegetarian by choice (p. 41).

In another episode of his life, during a short period of his stay in England he was smitten by the infatuation to become the English gentleman and he spent good amount of money on his clothes, hat, double watch chain of gold, lessons in dancing, French elocution and violin. But shortly afterwards, a realization came and he embarked upon simple and plain living. He thought, 'If my character made a gentleman of me, so much the better. Otherwise I should forgo the ambition' (p. 44). MG's reference to the word 'character' has an inward bearing.

Dialectic (negotiation) of the inner and the outer worlds: Creating and maintaining balance and harmony

We live in a culture and society, and have to constantly negotiate with external forces and constraints in order to honour and protect ourselves, and create a sense of harmony in our being. This does not always entail fighting with those external forces, but does involve taming them so that inner and the outer reach a state of harmonious equilibrium. Changes and adjustment are required on the part of both the actor and the context (others). Perhaps this is the reason that led MG to make a number of changes in his diet and ways of living. He decided to economize and embarked on a simple and plain living. He wrote:

> The change harmonized my inward and outward life … my life was certainly more truthful and my soul knew no bounds of joy (p. 47).

SA drew a parallel between the spiritual conflict within and the world conflict without:

> Everything internal is ripe or ripening, but there is a sort of locked struggle in which neither side can make a very appreciable advance, the spiritual force insisting against the resistance of the physical world, that resistance disputing every inch and making more or less effective counter attacks…. And if there were not the strength and Ananda within, it would be harassing and disgusting work; but the eye of knowledge looks beyond and sees that it is only a protracted episode (OH, p. 425).

SA always preferred to remain in the background while participating in the Revolutionary Movement. He did not want to come under the eyes of the British, who could disrupt his revolutionary activities and fiery writings criticizing both them and the Congress. To a disciple he once wrote:

> I was never ardent about fame even in my political days; I preferred to remain behind the curtain, push people without their knowing it and get things done … (SAFAA, p. 71).

This shows how an authentic person might take appropriate actions under crucial circumstances.

An important event in the life of MG serves to illustrate how an authentic individual deals with situations demanding compromise. In South Africa, when he was admitted as an advocate in the Supreme Court he was asked to remove his turban and he complied:

> Not that, if I had resisted the order, the resistance could not have been justified. But I wanted to reserve my strength for fighting bigger battles. I should not exhaust my skill as a fighter insisting on retaining my turban. It was worthy of a better cause…. But all my life through, the very insistence on truth has taught me to appreciate the beauty of compromise … this spirit was an essential part of Satyagraha (p. 123).

Another instance through which the 'beauty of compromise' can be understood is regarding MG's becoming a target of colour prejudice in South Africa while travelling. In his own words:

> I knew it was sheer injustice and an insult, but I thought it better to pocket it. I could not have forced myself inside, and if I had raised a protest, the coach could have gone off without me. This would have meant the loss of another day, … so, much as I fretted within myself, I prudently sat next to the coachmen (p. 95).

Neither of these instances should be taken as evidence of yielding. Rather they clearly indicate how an authentic individual struggles with and resolves challenges in the external environment. SA rightly states,

> Our actual enemy is not any force exterior to ourselves, but our own crying weaknesses, our cowardice, our selfishness, our hypocrisy, our purblind sentimentalism (SAFAA, p. 40).

Honouring the self: Courage and strength to stand for one's beliefs

Authenticity is a quality of self-experience wherein we value ourselves, and affirm and own all that belongs to our self. After rejecting the Indian Civil Service, SA joined the Baroda State Service under the Gaekwad of Baroda with more or less the same work as in the ICS. However, he saw a difference between the two:

> Baroda was a native state under a native ruler. You did not have to be all attention to the superior English officer ruling your fate. There was much room for freedom and dignity (SAFAA, p. 23).

An authentic person is master of the self and enjoys the freedom of this mastery expressed in the form of self-determination and realized in everyday conduct through actions with clear intentions. This event in SA's life also illustrates the way an authentic person drives his life and gives it shape, negotiating with situations and circumstances. SA chose to serve a native Indian ruler rather than a British officer, and maintained an independent way of working.

Another beautiful description of authenticity can be found in SA's reply to a student who asked him how to improve his English:

> Do not be anybody's slave, but be your own master. By reading Macaulay or any other writer you will never be like him … never an original. Therefore, you may read any good author carefully, but should think for yourself and form your own judgement … cultivate a habit of writing and in this way you will be the master of your style (SAFAA, p. 26).

SA never compromised on his belief that only one ideal should be followed in India's struggle for freedom—complete independence—and this was the primary reason for the split in Congress into Moderates and Nationalists.

> We of the new school would not pitch our ideal one inch lower than absolute swaraj—self-government as it exists in the United Kingdom (SAFAA, p. 63).

SA was steadfast in exercising his political will and extremely clear in his position vis-à-vis India's freedom struggle and its goals:

> Sri Aurobindo's first preoccupation was to declare openly for complete and absolute independence as the aim of political action in India and to insist on this persistently in the pages of the journal; he was the first politician in India who had the courage to do this in public and he was immediately successful (OH, p. 29).

As is known to all, MG never compromised on the core values of truth and non-violence, no matter how difficult the circumstances. At the age of 18, before leaving for England, he had to appear before his caste people (*modh baniā*) who were agitated over his going abroad since it was against their religion. At the meeting he showed tremendous courage, and nothing could change his decision to go abroad. In MG's own words:

> How I suddenly managed to muster up courage I do not know. Nothing daunted, and without the slightest hesitation, I came before the meeting (p. 34).

The depth of his courage can very well be deciphered, for his weapon for procuring justice and truth was *satyāgraha* (*satya*-truth, *āgraha*-firmness). An important aspect of honouring the self is to 'be yourself'. Both SA and MG had lived in England. SA had spent fourteen of his most formative years there. But both men always remained what they were—simple seekers of Truth, without being affected by the attractions of Western society. Dinendra Kumar Roy, in *Aurobindo Prasanga*, writes:

> But what struck me as amazing was that his noble heart had suffered not the least contamination from the luxury and dissipation, the glitter and glamour, the diverse impressions and influences, and the strange spell of western society (SAFAA, p. 33).

MG always sought to be transparent in his deeds and thoughts. In his words, '*It went against the grain with me to do a thing in secret that I would not do in public*' (p. 76). MG speaks about being 'pained' on seeing the pretensions and artificiality of Indian princes who were invited to Lord Curzon's *darbār* in India and dressed in Western attire—

> On the Darbar day they put on trousers befitting Khansamas and shining boots. I was pained and inquired one of them the reason for the change (p. 192).

Serenity, stability and composure amidst chaos and difficulties

Neither SA nor MG were swayed by difficulties. SA always practiced equanimity and was never afraid to move away from security and stability to undertake a higher quest. In SA's own words about his stay in the Alipore Jail:

> I have spoken of a year's imprisonment. It would have been more appropriate to speak of an year's living in an Ashram or a hermitage…. The only result of the wrath of the British Government was that I found God (SAFAA, p. 92).

Despite the attempts on the part of the British Government to arrest SA and thwart his *yoga-sādhanā*, he remained unscathed and detached and sailed through the precarious situations. In SA's words,

> I have borne every attack which human beings have borne, otherwise I would be unable to assure anybody 'This too can be conquered' (OH, p. 154).

In MG's words, 'I have found by experience that man makes his plans to be often upset by God, but, at the same time where the ultimate goal is the search of truth, no matter how a man's plans are frustrated, the issue is never injurious and often better than anticipated' (p. 254).

And this is the reason why he could devotionally offer his service to the plague patients without in the least being bothered by the danger of his own infection. He would always see problems as tests of honesty and sincerity. In one very trying situation he said, '*No use shedding tears. Let us do whatever else is humanly possible …*' (p. 253).

SA's remarks regarding the 'Shiva temperament' convey the strong sense of stability he graciously possessed:

> I have no special liking for the ideal of Shiva, though something of the Shiva temperament must necessarily be present. I never had any turn for rejection of the money power nor any attachment to it. One has to rise above these things; but it is precisely when one has risen above that one can more easily command them (OH, p. 356).

The stability, serenity and strength of both these spiritual seekers can also be gauged from the way they responded to the death of their loved ones. On getting the news of his mother's death, MG was deeply pained. However, he was in full control of himself.

> But I remember that I did not give myself up to any wild expression of grief. I could even check the tears, and took to life just as though nothing had happened (p. 73).

SA also had a very composed way of responding to the sudden death of his wife. Despite experiencing profound pain, he maintained spiritual poise and equanimity. In a letter to his father-in-law, SA writes:

> God has seen good to lay upon me the one sorrow that could still touch me to the centre. He knows better than ourselves what is best for each of us, and now that the first sense of the irreparable has passed, I can bow with submission to His divine purpose … where I have once loved, I do not cease from loving. Besides she who was the cause of it, still is near though not visible to our physical vision (SAFAA, p. 167).

Meaning in life: A sense of purpose and mission and the conviction to follow it.

An authentic person assumes responsibility for choosing his values, principles, and goals. He has the awareness that he must create a meaningful life, one that will result in the experience of inner fulfillment. These themes are echoed in the lives of both SA and MG. SA was clear about his initial mission to '*help uplift the Nation*' (SAFAA, p. 107). In a letter to his wife Mrinalini, he wrote:

> I know I have the strength to redeem this fallen race. It is not physical strength. It is the strength of knowledge…. God has sent me to this world to accomplish this great mission. When I was fourteen the seed began to sprout, at eighteen the foundation became firm and unshakable (SAFAA, p. 53).

MG from a very young age became rooted in his belief that truth is the sovereign principle governing all aspects of life. For him:

> Truth became my sole objective (p. xi).
> I never resorted to untruth in my profession … my principle was put to test many a time in South Africa … I always wished that I should win only if my

> client's case was right … and I was confirmed in my conviction that it was not impossible to practice law without compromising truth (MG, p. 302).

An authentic person listens carefully to the voice of his deepest inclinations and learns to make choices and act according to what makes inner sense. This gives us insight into our intentions and clarity about goals. Listening to that inner voice, believing in our prayers and having faith in our *sādhanā* can be seen as what Parameshwar (2005) refers to as 'invoking transcendental epistemologies' which act almost as guides in helping actualize our higher purpose. The following excerpts from the life of MG and SA show how they went beyond conventional ways of making sense of reality and invoked epistemologies that access divine information. Gandhi routinely uses the *epistemology of prayer*; he begins his autobiography stating that he has come to the decision that in his life he will run the boldest risks which he arrived at as a result of deep and prayerful thinking.

> I had long since taught myself to follow the inner voice. I delighted in submitting to it. To act against it would be difficult and painful to me (MG, p. 113).

SA's experiences in the jail led him to rely increasingly on the inner voice—the '*adesh*' or the divine command from within—to regulate his actions. His decision to go to Pondicherry and his mission to help uplift the nation were all a part of the Divine command he got from within. In the Uttarpara speech he mentions:

> A day passed and a second day and a third, when a voice came to me from within, 'Wait and see.' Then I grew calm and waited … for the voice of God within me, to know what He had to say to me, to learn what I had to do (SAFAA, p. 99).

Two final excerpts illustrate the clarity of purpose these great men possessed:

> … I am content to work still on the spiritual and psychic plane, preparing there the ideas and forces which may afterwards at the right moment and under the right conditions precipitate themselves into the vital and material field, and I have been careful not to make any public pronouncement as that might prejudice my possibilities of future action (OH, p. 439).

> What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years—is self realization, to see God face to face…. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to the same end (MG, p. x).

Service for mankind: Compassion and love for all

The narratives also show how these extraordinary men transcended their own life situation and compassionately noticed the suffering of others. In a profound way they could connect their own suffering to that which manifested universally. SA was never interested in attaining his personal salvation. In a prayer he said:

> If you do exist, you know my mind. You know I don't care for liberation;

> what others want has no attraction for me. I want power so that I may raise this country and serve my dear countrymen (SAFAA, p. 48).
>
> It did not seem anything like a supreme aim or worth being pursued for its sake; a solitary salvation leaving the world to its fate was felt as almost distasteful (OH, p. 12).
>
> I am developing the necessary powers for bringing down the spiritual on the material plane, and I am now able to put myself into men, and change them, removing the darkness and bringing light, giving them a new heart and a new mind.... (OH, p. 423).

MG was always motivated by the spirit of service:

> My profession progressed satisfactorily, but that was far from satisfying me. The question of further simplifying my life and of doing some concrete act of service to my fellowmen had been constantly agitating me.... I longed for some humanitarian work of permanent nature (p. 169).
>
> The heart's earnest and pure desire is always fulfilled. Service of the poor has been my heart's desire, and it has always thrown me amongst the poor and enabled me to identify myself with them (p. 127).

When Gandhi was pushed out of a train because he was a coloured person in South Africa despite having a first class ticket, rather than focusing on his personal humiliation he saw his suffering as merely a symptom of the larger disease of colour prejudice.

> I began to think of my duty.... It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was only superficial — only a symptom of the deep disease of color prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease.... The incident deepened my feeling for the Indian settlers (MG, p. 94).

MG also had a deeper love for people, was compassionate towards one and all, be it the indentured labourers of South Africa, the *Harijans* of India or the poor indigo farmers. He always forgave others who had wronged him in any way.

> I hope God will give me the courage and the sense to forgive them.... I have no anger against them. I am only sorry for their ignorance and their narrowness (p. 159).
>
> ... the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be. 'Hate the sin not the sinner' (p. 230).

Thus we see how these six themes run parallel in the lives of SA and MG, yet unfolded in different ways. Their lives were in a rhythmic and harmonious flow, with their self ever growing and ever flowering. They were at peace with themselves and experienced joy in whatever they did. They had a clear vision of the purpose and meaning of their lives and had compassion for others. Their entire being was under the psychic influence, organized by and identified with it. When thoughts, feelings and actions are in tune with each other, and are aligned in unity with the

core of self, there is no place for inner conflicts and blocks. Life flows freely and smoothly and one feels unshackled, uninhibited and natural, without the need for any façade or mask. The self is owned and valued, free to grow and evolve. And with the authentic growth of the self, others may be inspired to grow along with it. Because of their unity with the psychic being, authentic selves are always in a state of receptivity, inner joy, energy, progress, strength, and freedom, and everything has meaning.

> When someone is destined for the Path, all circumstances through all the deviations of mind and life help in one way or another to lead him to it. It is his own psychic being within him and Divine Power above that use to that end the vicissitudes both of mind and outward circumstance (Sri Aurobindo, 1970a, Part 2, p. 550).

Rethinking / revisiting authenticity

The study of these life stories indicates that in authentic living there is emphasis on knowing and accepting the true self and acting with determination and conviction, rather than getting shaped by superficial conventions and whims. It also recognizes the power of the cultural and social dimensions of our existence, and the necessity of a continuous negotiation between the inner world and the outer becomes integral to the very process of living. And striking a balance between the personal and socio-cultural remains at the very heart of authenticity. An authentic person can never negate or disown his true self, and has the courage, strength, belief and conviction to stand up for what he believes to be true. Therefore with respect to the locus of authenticity (in the person or social space) one can say that authenticity appears in the dialectic between the inner and outer. In existentialist thought a person is construed as '*Dasein*', which indicates the concretely existing human being who is there as part of a world (being-in-the-world). The person and the world are co-constituted, and not separate entities. Hence personal authenticity operates in relation to others. It entails responsibility not only toward one's self, but also toward others, so that a sense of balance is created between self and society, between the inner and outer world.

Living authentically, therefore, does not imply going against society or violating the social norms, values or beliefs. An authentic self carries the social along with it, and strives not for personal goods or gains, but for the good of all—*sarvodaya*. Believing in one's true self can never be antagonistic to the social good or welfare, since one's true self is the seat of the Divine. A true rebel (non-conformist) has always been an agent of change for a stagnant, unproductive society. To progress, to change, to grow is the universal law of life and authentic living is in perfect alignment with that. An authentic life style can never involve a sheer emulation of the 'givens' and a blind adherence to what is 'done' or 'not done' in the society.

Authenticity should not be pictured as the 'stance of a rugged individualist who … creates his or her own world through leaps of radical freedom' (Guignon,

1993). It doesn't imply complete freedom to promote personal wishes and desires. To be authentic means to be responsible and to be accountable for the choices made. What is needed is a balance between freedom and responsibility. May claimed that modern society is suffering from an unhealthy division of love and will, the former focuses on others, while the latter on the self. Unity of love and will is required since both involve care, both necessitate choice, both imply action and both require responsibility (1969).

Furthermore, authentic living does not entail either uncensored or blind expression of one's instincts, desires, and wishes, for this would imply servitude and slavery to our instincts and desires, and curbing of our freedom under the arbitrary rule of needs. But an authentic person is a master of the self and not its slave. Authenticity is a deeper experience. To be what one is, to live out in action one's true nature and one's potentialities, requires self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-control. 'If there is a constant use of the will the rest of the being learns however slowly to obey the will and then the actions become in conformity with the will and not with the vital impulses and desires. As for the rest (the feelings and desires etc. themselves) if they are not indulged in action or imagination and not supported by the will, if they are merely looked at and rejected when they come, then after some struggle they begin to lose their force and dwindle away' (Sri Aurobindo, 1970a, Part 4, pp. 1719–1720).

The issue of choice or agency is central to the understanding of authenticity. As an existential concept, a major element defining authenticity is choice and responsibility. To be authentic is to be autonomous, to consciously make choices and to be responsible. There can be an external, moral order guiding one's actions, or it can be self-created morality, with internalized social values. Whatever be the location of the guideposts or the values that give direction to one's life, the emphasis of authentic living is on the location of the agency within the individual, who chooses what to make of his life and how to author it. An authentic person stands for himself, affirms and owns whatever he feels belongs to him or her. Even when the authentic individual is practicing self-denial or is subjugating his 'voice', it cannot be taken as an incidence of unauthentic behaviour, for he *is choosing* to make a compromise. Thus there is both awareness and acceptance in any authentic position.

Towards a model of authenticity

Keeping all these various issues in mind, and drawing on Indian thought, a model is proposed which we can call the '*growth model of authenticity*'. Authenticity is a process of evolution and growth, not an unattainable ideal. It is something to be experienced, in different degrees, at different levels, in various forms. Understanding authenticity as 'the coming forward of the psychic being' might also serve as the movement of synthesis between the essentially opposing movements of Eastern and Western systems. Viewing it in this way allows a fresh perspective on the experience of being-in-the-world beyond realm of personality. Humans are

inherently evolutionary beings, participating in the constant process of becoming. The psychic in them continues growing. One of the ways of conceptualizing authenticity is to view it as *varying with levels and across domains/spheres of life*. Authenticity would be contingent on one's '*identity consciousness*', the way the real self is defined. That level of identification could be based on Sri Aurobindo's concentric system of organization of the being and its parts. It consists of a series of sheaths comprising the outer being, the inner being and the inmost being, each of which has three corresponding parts—physical (body), vital (life nature) and mental (mind). At the very core of the inmost being is the psychic being that supports the outer and the inner beings. The meaning of authenticity for a person identifying the self with the body (as is normally the case) would be different from the person who identifies with intellect/mind. There is a scope for upward movement, from an outer/lower/micro level of identification to an inner/higher/macro level. Harmonization and unification of all the disparate parts of the being can be brought about by discovering our psychic being, which then organizes and governs body, life, and mind. This can be achieved through the *sādhanā* or through the Divine Grace. Thus, making persistent and sincere efforts to have conscious contact with the psychic being and bringing it forward to govern our life is the foundation of authenticity.

The 'identity consciousness' shifts in intensity in the course of one's life, as well as in everyday experience. Depending on the cognitive, emotional and spiritual maturity and personal or dispositional factors and situational factors such as immediate environment, relational context, temporal and spatial context, the level at which the person would identify self, that is, the identity consciousness, would vary. Thus the way we act, or to which part of the self we are being true to, would depend on our identity consciousness, which in turn depends on a host of other factors. Therefore we can say that authenticity is not about consistency in behaviour, but about congruence and correspondence between the inner (self) and outer (behaviour).

Conclusion

What is authenticity, and what does it mean to be an authentic person? These are perennial questions that every generation has to address. The question of authenticity existentially calls for a response (Mills, 1997), and the present effort is an attempt to add detail to the map of this crucial feature of human experience. We began by examining the concept of authenticity in the psychological literature, and then we explored the construct from the Indian perspective. The literature demonstrates that authenticity is a quality of self-experience, wherein one feels true to one's being. From the qualitative analyses of the biographies of Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi, the notion of authenticity emerges as a life process. It is a journey, not a destination. On the one hand, authenticity lies in knowing one's self, one's thoughts, feelings and beliefs, one's potentialities and purpose; on the other, it is the manifestation of these inner aspects in terms of

actions and behaviours, captured by the adages, 'Be yourself' and 'To thine own self be true'. Authentic individuals are integral persons because what they do outwardly matches with who they are inside.

From the preceding discussion authenticity emerges as multifaceted, consisting of: (a) self-awareness/self-knowledge, (b) self-acceptance, (c) self-regulation, (d) responsibility (towards self and others), (e) being in tune with oneself (congruence), (f) growth/learning orientation, (g) conviction, strength and courage.

Life today is characterized by a sense of alienation from self and society. People escape responsibility and hide behind social and conditioned roles. They follow a very calculative approach to life characterized by giving in order to get. Everything is done with some selfish end in mind. It can make us calculating, fearful and egocentric. Our conditioning has separated us from our true nature (see Krishnamurty, 1972). All this calls for authentic living. We need to get rid of the narrowness of the egoic self, which is separative and isolating. Authenticity is not the manifestation of ego, it is the manifestation of the true encompassing self. Leading an authentic life, therefore, means moving beyond the boundaries of the ego. This cannot happen in a day, but demands concerted effort and life-long investment. That's one reason why authenticity is a process and not a product; a journey, not a destination. The lives of SA and MG substantiate this. Authentic existence involves a clear-sighted recognition that, at the deepest level, being human does not consist of self-encapsulated individuals in unavoidable conflict with others (Guignon, 1993, p. 235), but of a broader existence.

Humans have a quality of being that goes beyond the level of animal existence. Our genetic makeup and our extensive potential for modifiability communicates unmistakably that we are meant for something higher and more inclusive. The authentic self, living as a situated being in the world, is one that embodies *dharma* and *svadharma*. It is within our ability to attain our natural greatness and fulfill our potential. That is what defines the purpose of human existence. Thus the focus of social and clinical practices including future research should be on the inculcation and maintenance of authenticity across the life span, whether in educational institutions, psychotherapeutic settings, the workplace or the family. We will close with the words of Sri Aurobindo, who has articulated this beautifully:

> Every one has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.... It is he himself who must be induced to expand according to his own nature (SAFAA, p. 72).

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Section 3

Pathways to knowledge

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Introduction

Since antiquity the urge to know the world from within and without has been a major concern for humans and has led to the formulation of various traditions of human inquiry. In general, all such inquiries are tested against the criterion of whether they constitute a systematic, unbiased, and dependable understanding of reality. In this context, a distinction is often made between faith about, and knowledge of some part of reality (the object of knowledge), which is supposed to exist independently. The appreciation of this reality is not reality, but is certainly expected to be a valid (re)presentation of that reality, and it is this, that allows us to work or play with it and create something new.

The knower–known (subject–object) relationship, which appears quite simple, is actually quite complex. It requires us to assume that reality exists independent of us, that it can be known through certain means, and that the resulting knowledge can be represented and communicated in an authentic manner. It is the assumption of having access to reality which implies the possibility of an independent reality. Our life-world is organized and sustained within and through our appreciations of reality, and therefore, reality-claims are warranted and have to be established if we want to function well. The evidence and proof of reality becomes then critical to this exercise. This inspired the knowledge seekers to evolve an approach which is public, objective, and observation–based, and which supplies undisputable accounts of reality. It is the studies in the physical sciences and physiology that paved the way for elaborating the ground rules of the empirical and positivist framework, for playing the game of science. In the course of time their scientific procedures were systematized, standardized, and adopted by various other disciplines.

It may be noted that the dogmas of religion in the Western world led to a strong opposition between the institutions of the church, and those of science. Within the context of the enlightenment, science and (scientific) methodology emerged as a powerful practice for rendering reliable knowledge. The industrial revolution and resultant material progress were taken as a substantiation of the genuineness and irrefutability of the scientific endeavour. Against this backdrop, 'science' acquired status, authority and power in the pursuit of knowledge in disparate fields such as the human, social, mathematical, physical, natural and the life sciences. It was assumed that one day we would have complete knowledge of the world via science. This came to be known as the modernity project.

The apparent success of science furnishes perceived legitimacy to the institution of science in the process of knowledge production. Courses on scientific method constitute the core of most of the social/behavioural teaching programmes. Until recently such efforts have been confined primarily to quantitative, third-person approaches. However, ample arguments and demonstrations have been put forward about the limitations of such approaches. The challenges have come from many directions, in particular from the study of the history of science, deliberations in the philosophy of science, and social studies of science. They suggest that the much publicized rational, value-free, and objective image of science is subject to certain limitations, and empiricism has been overburdened by the over-enthusiastic followers of science. The problem becomes crucial especially once we move from the physical sciences to the human sciences.

Impressed by the success story of physical sciences, psychologists appropriated their methodology. In the process, they moved from the study of psyche and consciousness to behaviour, and from there back to the study of mental processes. However, the assumptions about the existence of such an 'objective' reality, and approaching that reality and making judgments about it that are complex, have generated rich and sophisticated philosophical discourses. The possibility of undisputed knowledge and its foundations has been construed and discredited in many ways. Those thinkers who question the possibility of observer-independent reality, argue in favour of a constructivist account of knowledge. They endorse the tenability of multiple perspectives on reality, contingent on the intellectual resources available during a given socio-historical epoch. This goes against the certitude that was much sought after in most of the earlier accounts of knowledge, and brings in an element of insecurity as a natural condition in which one has to live. The developments in post-modernist thought clearly imply this position, thus leading to hermeneutic and interpretive modes of knowledge generation, in which there are interpretations but no ultimate reality.

The academic agenda of psychology and its concerns were designed to suit the demands of the scientific method. The mainstream remained preoccupied with questions, methods (for example, observation, experimentation, psychological testing), and applications (for example, deficits, pathology, mind-control), all within a positivist framework. A close scrutiny of the developments in the history of psychology tends to suggest that the metaphors used for describing and explaining psychological processes were cultural products, and their emergence was largely a politico-economic matter. They charted the psychological territory within a specific socio-cultural milieu, and the findings were not cumulative. The investigations and theories in a given domain led to always new issues, instead of pursuing the prior issues in a consistent manner. The proliferation of concepts and theories in a given area of study (for example, intelligence, personality, motivation) exemplifies the difficulties in consolidation of the field. Also, methodological rigour in terms of representativeness, replication, stability within and between persons, and validity of observations, all rest on precarious grounds.

The conceptual foundations of psychology reflect considerable divergence

which is deep-rooted in terms of ontology as well as epistemology (for example, psychodynamic, neural, cognitive, social, and cultural), and which hardly allows for effective inter-systemic communication. The scene is now changing, and pluralism in theory and methodology is becoming increasingly accepted. In recent years qualitative methods involving interpretive strategies have been invoked, and themes like spirituality, religion and virtue are being addressed. The recognition of culture as a resource in cross-cultural and cultural psychological works has facilitated confluence of many divergent streams of work.

Knowledge (*vidyā*) in the Indian tradition stands for knowing, being, perceiving and thinking. It is not only concerned with the external reality, but also relates to the inner world; as well as a world which is inclusive of both. The *Bhagavad Gītā* describes *yoga*, *tapas*, and *svādhyāya* as major ways of pursuing knowledge. The Vedāntic tradition talks about *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nidhidyāsana*, while Yoga talks about the eight ladders (*aṣṭāṅga yoga*). In all these traditions, empiricism is not treated as the ultimate foundation of knowledge, and other methods are entertained in which unmediated knowledge of reality is attempted.

Reality is understood in terms of two broad categories, referred to as transcendent and manifest (*para* and *apara*), which differ in their epistemology, ontology and methodology. While the former deals with spiritual knowledge and self-realization, the latter relates to the social and scientific domains of the empirical world. The Indian worldview attempts to transcend the gap between these two aspects of reality, or bridges the two by adopting a comprehensive and holistic third position. This section of the present volume addresses the problems and possibilities in different modes of psychological knowledge, as represented in various traditions of Indian thought.

In the first chapter, entitled 'Indian psychology and the scientific method', Peter Sedlmeier explores how the two can go together, and elucidates how the Indian tradition can be used as a source for specific psychological hypotheses that can be tested within the formal parameters of mainstream science. Sedlmeier first outlines the standards of the scientific method and then introduces his own conception of what genuine Indian psychology is all about, including a 'metatheory' of Indian psychology. From this metatheory (and to a certain extent also from theories that are included in the metatheory), he derives several classes of testable hypotheses and exemplifies these with the help of some specific hypotheses or questions. Subsequently, Sedlmeier comes back to the topic of methods with an emphasis on the special methods needed to examine some of the hypotheses that deal with different aspects of consciousness. The chapter ends with an exploration of possible 'interfaces' between Indian and Western academic psychology.

In the second chapter, William Braud makes an attempt at 'Integrating yoga epistemology and ontology into an expanded integral approach to research', on the basis of his work on 'Integral Inquiry' at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. Braud is of the view that Indian psychology and *yogic* epistemology and ontology can contribute much to enrich research aimed at bridging the gap between science and the spiritual/wisdom traditions. He describes ways in which

yogic principles, and processes closely related to these, already have been usefully introduced into research praxis, and suggests additional ways in which aspects of *yoga* might be integrated into research in the future and how this might enliven and transform the research enterprise.

In 'Knowing in the Indian tradition', Girishwar Misra gives an account of Indian theories of cognition. Indian theories of cognition emphasize universal concepts, and view reality as a unified whole. The process of knowing begins with doubt, and the desire to know. In general, Misra points out, two domains of knowledge are differentiated in the Indian view—the transcendental (*pāramārthika*) and the empirical (*vyāvahārika*). Transcendental reality is considered as non-changing and universal. The major issues that have been discussed are mind, consciousness, and reality. Misra notes that there is a certain degree of similarity between the Indian and the Western mode of intellectual inquiry. In the Indian view, mind is conceptualized as an internal sense organ. Misra concludes that the Indian perspective on knowing holds contemporary relevance and has practical utility.

Matthijs Cornelissen makes in 'What is knowledge? A reflection based on the work of Sri Aurobindo' a case for the existence of essentially different modes of knowing. Cornelissen notes that Aurobindo identified four forms of knowing—knowledge by identity, knowledge by intimate direct contact, knowledge by separative direct contact and wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact. Cornelissen goes on to elaborate these four types of knowledge as follows: (1) knowledge by indirect separative contact includes scientific knowledge of the outer reality; (2) knowledge by direct separative contact is the semi-objective introspection of inner processes; (3) knowledge by direct intimate contact is the experiential knowledge of inner processes; and (4) knowledge by identity is the *Vedic* knowledge, in which knower, knowledge and known are one. In Aurobindo's view, direct, intuitive knowledge by identity forms the essential core of all our knowledge. The author offers some arguments why such unconstructed, intuitive knowledge might actually exist, and then outlines some of the ways by which the Indian tradition has tried to make self-observation and intuition more accurate and reliable.

S. R. Bhatt gives a study of early Buddhist cognitive theories in 'The Noetic process (*citta vīthi*): A Therāvāda Buddhist view'. This chapter analyses psychologically the cognitive process as it is presented in the Therāvāda Abhidhamma tradition which is the earliest tradition of Buddhism and which provides the foundation to all later Buddhist schools. Bhatt clarifies at the very onset that the Buddhist theory of knowledge is a subsidary of the Buddhist theory of reality, which aims at the attainment of *nirvāṇa* (eternal bliss). The chapter first summarizes the Buddhist conception of knowledge, and then goes on to provide an analysis of the process of cognition.

13

Indian psychology and the scientific method

Peter Sedlmeier

Introduction

Can Western academic psychology and Indian psychology come together? Although there are some sceptical voices, most of the Indian authors who have written about the topic indicate possibilities to build up connections between the two approaches (for example, Auluck, 2002; Mathew, 2004; Paranjpe, 2004; Krishna Rao, 1997). On the Western side, postulates to consider Indian psychological approaches came mainly from practitioners working with some school of depth psychology (for example, Cortright, 2004; Coster, 1998) or scholars trying to connect Western therapeutic approaches with Indian meditative disciplines (Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Roche, 2001; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006). To date, Western academic psychologists outside (and inside) the clinical area seem to be largely unaware of the richness of the Indian approach, whereas proponents of Indian psychology (who are not always psychologists by training) frequently seem to lack knowledge about the vast array of research topics and the fruitful findings in Western academic psychology that have been accumulated in the last some 130 years since Wilhelm Wundt established the first psychology laboratory in Leipzig in 1879.

Apart from mutual ignorance, there might indeed be serious problems in the attempt to bridge the gap between the two approaches. However, I think that, because of the immense potential benefits for psychology as a whole, one should give the endeavour a serious try before being content with two isolated approaches. In my view, one of the conditions for Indian psychology to be acknowledged in the West is that relevant research adheres to the methodological standards postulated in Western academia as expressed in the *scientific method*. In this chapter, I will, for the sake of the argument, first outline what these standards are and why I think that they are important. Then I will introduce my conception of what genuine Indian psychology is all about, including a 'metatheory' of Indian psychology. From this metatheory (and to a certain extent also from theories that are included in the metatheory) I will try to derive several classes of testable hypotheses and exemplify these with the help of some specific hypotheses or questions, some of which are already under scrutiny since long. After that, I will come back to the topic of methods with an emphasis on the special methods needed to examine some of

the hypotheses that deal with different aspects of consciousness. The chapter ends with some ideas about possible 'interfaces' between Indian and Western academic psychology.

The scientific method, Western style

Although there might be some disagreement about the exact nature of specific steps—depending on particularities of the research questions—the procedure sketched out in Figure 13.1 is commonly taken to be the way science works. This pragmatic *scientific method* stems from the natural sciences and was adopted more or less unchanged by Western academic psychology (for example, Bunge & Ardila, 1990).

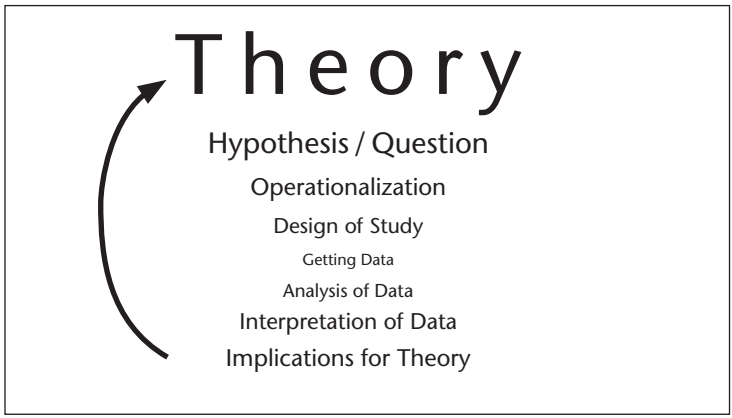

Figure 13.1. Scientific method, as commonly applied in academic psychology (adapted from Sedlmeier & Renkewitz, 2007).

Theories and hypotheses

The starting point of the scientific method is a *theory*. However, the scientific method does not cover the question of where theories come from. A well-known answer to that question is 'bed, bath, and bicycle', meaning that theories or good ideas can arise all of a sudden in states usually not connected to work. But also highly intuitive processes such as brainstorming, day-dreaming or mental imagination have been the basis for theories (Shepard, 1978). On a more systematic level, one can perform guided observations, look over theories and data which are already there or conduct pilot studies after having a first idea, often using qualitative methods. Finally, theories are often connected to metaphors such as the steam engine (Sigmund Freud's model of the id, ego and superego), the computer (many models in cognitive psychology) or the methods themselves (theories modelled after statistical procedures; see Gigerenzer, 1991). Basically there is no single systematic method to arrive at good theories because there is no deductive way to do that,

and there is nothing to say against theories that have been 'revealed' to somebody as we will see is claimed to be true for the metatheory of Indian psychology.

It is desirable to start out with a full-fledged theory, that is, a, model that covers a substantial amount of human experience and behaviour (including all kinds of cognitions and emotions) in considerable depth, but basically there are no limitations about what can be a theory: In the extreme, for instance, if a new path of enquiry is undertaken, which is actually quite rare these days, it might be just a rich idea.

The theory is most important (and therefore also written in the biggest font in Figure 13.1), because it—in the ideal case—determines the rest of the procedure. Usually, theories cannot be tested per se due to their complexities. That is why one derives from the theory simpler testable research hypotheses or questions and examines these.

Making hypotheses precise and testable

Usually the hypotheses themselves have to be further elaborated—the operations or procedures to make them testable, that is, observable in some way, have to be specified. This step is often termed *operationalization* and should lead to objective measurement. However, psychologists have produced convincing evidence that true objectivity is hard to achieve, because all our perceptions are to a certain extent determined by what we know or expect (Goldstein, 1999). It is even worse when we 'make measurements' from memory (for example, Loftus, 1979). Even the wording of questions and the specific scales used can elicit systematic expectations or yield biases (Schwarz, 1999; Sedlmeier, 2006). Nonetheless, the amount of intersubjective agreement can be systematically varied: The more precise one can be in the process of operationalization both for measuring outcomes and for creating the conditions and procedures for the study, the higher this agreement will be. The conditions and procedures for a study are usually summarized by the term *design*.

The design of the study specifies, for instance, when and how observations are to be made, or whether single persons or groups of persons should be looked at. Moreover, the design should allow the researcher to achieve high levels of external and internal validity. High external validity means that the results found can be generalized well to other persons and situations. The best way to ensure that is to take a random sample of the population for which generalizations should be made because then every member of the population has the same chance to be in the sample. A high internal validity is necessary when one wants to draw justifiable causal conclusions. The *via regia* to achieve a high internal validity is to conduct a (true) experiment. In the simplest case of a psychological experiment, two groups are compared that differ in the so-called *independent variable* (for example, in the independent variable *training* with the values '*yoga*-training' and 'no *yoga*-training'). If one now finds that the training group does better in some *dependent variable* (for example, a measure of happiness), one needs to rule out other possible causes for the difference found, as, for instance, differences in intelligence, motivation, teachers, or a priori happiness. This is usually done by randomizing, that is

dividing the participants in the experiment randomly between the training group and the control group. Randomizing ensures that all the possible moderator variables (alternative explanations, including those the experimenter has not thought of before) have comparable levels across groups. If randomizing is not possible, there is still a huge arsenal of techniques that allows one to control moderator variables at least to a certain extent.

When the design of a study is fixed (and sound), meaningful data can be collected. Note that there is no a priori restriction on which data are admissible to scientific scrutiny. There are, however, restrictions on what one can do with these data later on (for example, with which statistical procedures they can be analysed—see below). These data are then analysed and interpreted in the light of the theory. This interpretation in turn is used to make inferences about the theory.

The logic of testing hypotheses

There is still something missing in the above sketch of the scientific method. How, for instance, are hypotheses derived from theories? And how does one decide upon the value of the research outcome for the theory? Meanwhile, no serious scientist claims that theories can be proven or verified. This is made visible in Figure 13.1 by the loop structure of the process—theories are always 'provisional truths' that should be improved or abandoned according to empirical results. The most widely accepted principle that guides (or at least should guide, according to a common consensus among contemporary researchers) the selection of hypotheses and the interpretation or research outcomes is the *falsification principle*, which plays a central role in Popper's (1969) *critical rationalism*. Somewhat simplified, the falsification principle follows *modus tollens* (*H* for 'hypothesis', *O* for 'observation'):

$$\begin{array}{l} H \rightarrow O \\ \neg O \\ \hline \neg H \end{array}$$

In plain words: if a theory *H* predicts that observation *O* will be made and if *O* is not observed, then one should conclude that *H* is wrong. There are, however, two problems with this simple version. First, recall that all variables involved have to be operationalized. To do this, one needs additional assumptions (for example, that an IQ-test really measures intelligence; or that some special attributes of the participants do not have an influence on the results). If we call these *n* additional assumptions A_1, A_2,..., A_n, then *modus tollens* yields ('$\wedge$' stands for 'and' and '$\vee$' stands for 'or'):

$$\begin{array}{l} H \wedge A_1 \wedge A_2 \wedge \ldots \wedge A_n \rightarrow O \\ \neg O \\ \hline \neg H \vee \neg A_1 \vee \neg A_2 \vee \ldots \vee \neg A_n \end{array}$$

That means that strict falsification of a hypothesis is only possible if one can be sure that all additional assumptions hold (otherwise, not having observed O could be due to any (or all) of the assumptions A_1 to A_n being wrong). One can, of course, almost never be sure about that in psychological research. The second problem is that data in psychology (and also in the natural sciences) are fallible, due to random error or due to the influence of overlooked variables. This means that in practice, one discrepant observation is not enough evidence to reject a theory. To take care of this problem, Popper (1969) introduced the notion of 'probabilistic falsification': a theory is practically falsifiable if strongly deviating evidence is found repeatedly. Building on the critical rationalism, Lakatos (1970) argues that theories are embedded in a broader research programme. Such programmes have a theoretical kernel and a 'protecting belt'. According to Lakatos, the theoretical kernel cannot be falsified whereas hypotheses derived from the protecting belt can. A given research programme should, according to Lakatos, only be abandoned if a) it stagnates, and b) there is a rival research programme, that can explain all the phenomena explained by the first programme and that in addition allows to derive additional hypotheses. Note that this does not exclude formerly abandoned research programmes to revive again if there have been new insights that overcome stagnation. Also, Lakatos suggests that new theories should be given special protection so as not to run the risk of prematurely abandoning a promising research programme after a negative result.

However, in the daily scientific practice, pragmatic constraints also play important roles (Kuhn, 1970). Doing science means to work in a scientific community—whether one likes the views of the other members or not. Usually, there is intensive communication among the members, most often high consensus about the main issues, and a common or at least very similar education for students and young scholars. The commonly accepted theoretical assumptions, empirical generalizations and applications regarded as successful, as well as the methodology, technology and the scientific language used lead to what Kuhn (1970) called a *paradigm*. A paradigm has a strong resistance to change. If there is evidence that contradicts a theory, the research community first tries to explain these *anomalies* within the paradigm. If more anomalies arise, usually different groups of researchers try to modify the paradigm. But finally, if no good solution is found, a 'revolution' takes place, yielding a new theory with higher precision that is more specialized and able to account for more facts. However, such a revolution—leading to a new paradigm—might sometimes only take place after the death of some influential researcher, and it does not necessarily incorporate all the earlier knowledge.

In sum, one could argue that science does not exactly work like it should according to eminent philosophers of science such as Popper and Lakatos. Is this a sufficient reason to reduce the impact of philosophy of science to Feyerabend's 'anything goes' (1975, p. 4)? I do not think so. We probably have to accept that science does not yield absolute truths and that the best one can do about a theory is to try to reach informed consent in a community of researchers that are most

knowledgeable about the theory in question. This informed consent is, however, always open to modification depending on convincing empirically and logically based argument, or in other words: scientific theories are open to falsification.

Alternatives to the scientific method?

The provisional nature of scientific truth as well as the falsification principle may not look so attractive, but what are the alternatives? How can we arrive at knowledge? How do ordinary people arrive at their own 'theories' about how the world works? They say, for instance: 'I feel that this is right, it cannot be wrong' or they say that such and such (preferably an actor or noble-prize winner in chemistry who comes up with a psychological theory in a TV show) also holds this view. Another valued method to argue that something is true is to find half a dozen examples for a contention; and in general, looking for evidence is restricted to confirmatory search. It should be immediately clear, that neither a 'guts feeling', nor the opinion of 'authorities', nor examples provide good evidence. But why are these 'methods' used so commonly? One reason is that also wrong theories can by coincidence yield right predictions. Another reason is that our perception is usually quite selective and we tend to see what we want to see and overlook the rest. Moreover, explanations often come post hoc, that is, the theory comes after the data in some 'intuitive' way. But sometimes, theories also influence actions, which again yield respective reactions as, for instance, in the case of self-fulfilling prophecies (see Dawes, 1988, 2001, for ample evidence about all the above). For the advancement of knowledge, unsatisfying as it may be, there is, in my opinion, at present no alternative to using the scientific method.

Western scientific method and Indian orthodox systems

One might suspect that the Western scientific method is totally alien to the Indian orthodox systems, but Indian scholars might actually have applied it before the West did so. While the scientific method seems to have a lot in common with the methods of enquiry proposed in the Nyāya school, one of the six Indian orthodox systems of philosophy (see section on "What is Indian psychology"), the falsification principle has evidently already been used by Advaitic philosophers in the sixteenth century (Paranjpe, 2004). However, this ancient tradition seems to have been taken up rarely in contemporary Indian psychology (Ramakrishna Rao, 2004, p. 58):

> The most serious of the lacunae shared by many writers on Indian psychology is the failure to build models and draw out the implications of Indian thought for generating new research programmes that could advance the science of psychology.

One possible starting point for building up new research programmes might be to see how far one comes with applying the scientific method as sketched out above. This is what I am trying to explore in this chapter.

Indian psychology

For Western psychologists, at least those in academia, it might come as a surprise that there is something such as a genuine 'Indian psychology'. Indeed, Indian psychology in the sense meant here is not just a little modification of Western academic psychology, but a quite different view.

What is Indian psychology?

By 'Indian psychology' I do not mean 'psychology done in India', nor 'psychology done by Indian people', although all three of these may coincide. A glance through Indian psychology journals (with the notable exception of the *Indian Journal of Psychology*) and scholarly books (for example, Ramalingam, 2002) indicates that the methods used in work which could be classified under the latter two headings are usually not much different from what psychologists in the West do. This is no wonder, because the curricula in the Indian universities are mostly taken from mainstream Western psychology (Bhatia, 2002; Huppes, 2002; Petzold, 1989; Ramakrishna Rao, 1988), with a slow change to observe in recent years (Misra & Mohanty, 2002). So what then is Indian psychology? Indian psychology is 'the psychology that has grown out of Indian thought and ethos' (Ramakrishna Rao, 1988, p. 38). This thought and ethos is concentrated in the *Vedic* literature that originated between 1500 BCE and 500 CE (Sharma, 2003; Hiriyanna, 2000), although the exact time estimates differ.[1]

The *Vedic* scriptures are generally regarded as revealed to seers, that is, having a supernatural origin. These scriptures consist of four collections. The term *veda* (knowledge) stands sometimes only for the first or the first two collections, the *mantras* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, but sometimes it is also used to refer to all four parts (for example, Sharma, 2003). The last part, the *Upaniṣads* or Vedānta (= end of the *Vedas*) is often regarded as being the most relevant for psychology, although some authors also give great importance to the *mantras*, and especially the oldest one, the *Ṛg Veda* (for example, Sri Aurobindo, 1995; Singh, 2004).

The discussions in the *Upaniṣads* centre around four questions dealing with 'pure consciousness' or the 'supreme principle': the explanation of its nature, the prevalence of general ignorance about it, the necessity of having its knowledge, and the methods to achieve it (Kulkarni, 1978, p. 27). One could say that the concept of pure consciousness, which leads to a view of the world quite different from that of Western psychology, is the central contribution of Indian psychology (see also Cornelissen, 2003; 2004). What is this pure consciousness? A 'super-normal clarity of inward vision or intuition untroubled by either discursive intellection or hedonistic affection' (Sinha, 1958, p. 359). Attaining pure consciousness means—according to most authors—to enter a state of totally different consciousness and of knowledge that, according to all sources, cannot be compared with the status quo of the large majority of mankind (those who have not attained it). However, pure consciousness cannot be recognized by the normal mind, which according to most accounts only mirrors it. To achieve

pure consciousness, one has to practise specified methods,[2] which are also part of Indian psychology.

The original *Vedic* scriptures gave rise to several schools of thought which interpreted the contents of these scriptures sometimes quite differently. There are six 'orthodox' systems—orthodox in the sense, that they are based on different parts of the *Vedic* scriptures—that deal with different aspects. These six systems are usually seen as consisting of pairs: Sāṁkhya and Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, and Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta. These six systems have authors who not only acted as receivers of truth but put in their own ideas. The same holds for several 'heterodox systems' that developed in opposition to the then dominating Brahmanical tradition, whose rigid system of sacrificial ritual and social hierarchy was seen as oppressive and unsatisfactory (Hamilton, 2001). Examples of the heterodox systems are Jainism and the many forms of Buddhism. All these systems, orthodox and heterodox alike, deal with the question of how we can recognize our true Self and this true Self is nothing but pure consciousness; and all these systems—with the exception of Cārvāka, an early form of materialism in Indian thought—hold some common assumptions (for example, Hamilton, 2001; Raju, 1962; Shukla, 2004) which I term the *metatheory of Indian psychology*.

Indian psychology: A metatheory

The metatheory of Indian psychology, closely following the lines of thought advanced by Ramakrishna Rao (1997; 2004), is shown in Figures 13.2 and 13.3. It can be regarded as having three components—a description of the status quo of a 'normal person', a methodology to overcome the status quo, and a description of the result after having successfully applied that methodology.[3] So basically, the metatheory is a theory about change or, more exactly, transformation. According to the metatheory, ordinary persons are not aware of their true Self, which is nothing but pure consciousness. They live with a conception of self that arises from the interaction of mind, senses and external world (left part of Figure 2). In contrast to the prevalent Western view (for example, Farthing, 1992), consciousness in the Indian tradition is not identical to the mind or contained in it. Rather it is *reflected* in the mind—which is considered to be a very subtle form of matter—and enables it to make conscious contact with the internal and external world. This contact is, however, error prone and does not allow a person to know the true reality. The way out of this containment and into liberation is to apply a practical method out of a collection of methods, subsumed under the name of *yoga* (Sri Aurobindo, 1996, p. 3):

> All methods grouped under the common name of Yoga are special psychological processes founded on a fixed truth of Nature and developing, out of normal functions, powers and results which were always latent but which her ordinary movements do not easily or do not often manifest.

The methods of *yoga* are very diverse (for example, Eliade, 1970; Sri Aurobindo, 1996; see also Part II in Joshi & Cornelissen, 2004), but the goal is the same:

establishing the connection with pure consciousness and attaining liberation from a limited experience of the world. This conception of *yoga* can also be found in theories that originally stem from Indian approaches such as Zen and Tibetan Buddhism (Shukla, 2004; Chang, 1959). In contrast to the concept of consciousness as used in Western thought, which always is of or about something, pure consciousness has no qualities or characteristics of its own, but it underlies all our being and knowing.

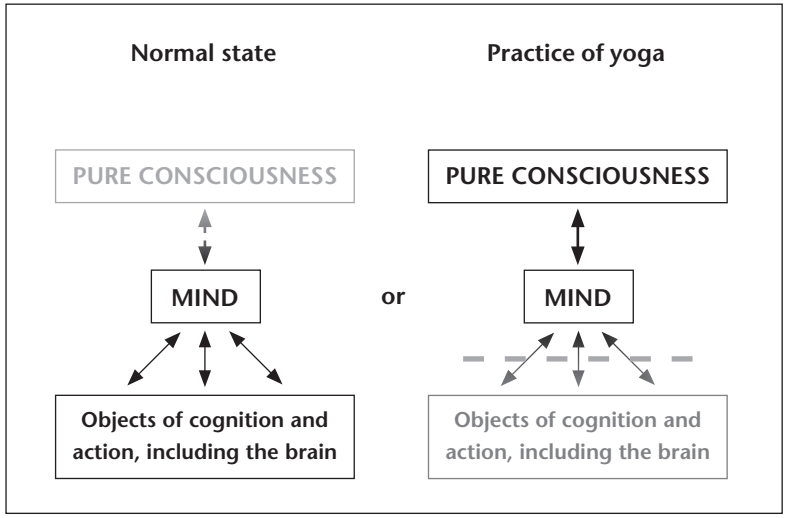

Figure 13.2. The first two stages of the metatheory.

The general method to attain pure consciousness is to free the mind from the senses and the objective world (right part of Figure 13.2). The experiences through the senses, which are also considered to consist of matter, although not as subtle as the mind, and—according to most accounts (for an exception, see AMA Samy, 2005, p. 22)—the influence of prior lives leads the mind to a wrong perception of the self and the ego. In many systems, liberation is achieved only at the expense of giving up normal life and choosing an ascetic life. Usually, this does not mean that the whole life should be ascetic. To the contrary, traditional systems found it helpful to first lead a normal life, before renouncing worldly affairs (for example, Raju, 1962). After liberation, however, the *yogī*, that is, the person who has successfully practiced *yoga* dwells in pure consciousness and gives up the contact to worldly affairs (see left part of Figure 3) because works will destroy his knowledge and bring him back to a life of bondage (see Jayashanmugam, 2002). This is, however, not true for Zen, where compassion with all other creatures in everyday life plays a central role in the life of enlightened persons as, for instance, expressed in the last of the famous 10 *ox-herding pictures* (for example, AMA Samy, 2005; Kapleau, 1989). Also, more recent *Vedāntin* philosophers and *yogīs* such as Swami

Vivekananda and Rama Thirta have questioned the renunciation of the social aspects of life (Srinivas, 2004); and Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga claims that the goal of liberation can be reached within everyday life (Sri Aurobindo, 1996; 2001; see also Maitra, 2001). In these systems the lower levels are not detached from the upper ones as soon as pure consciousness is acquired but become transformed themselves (right part of Figure 13.3).

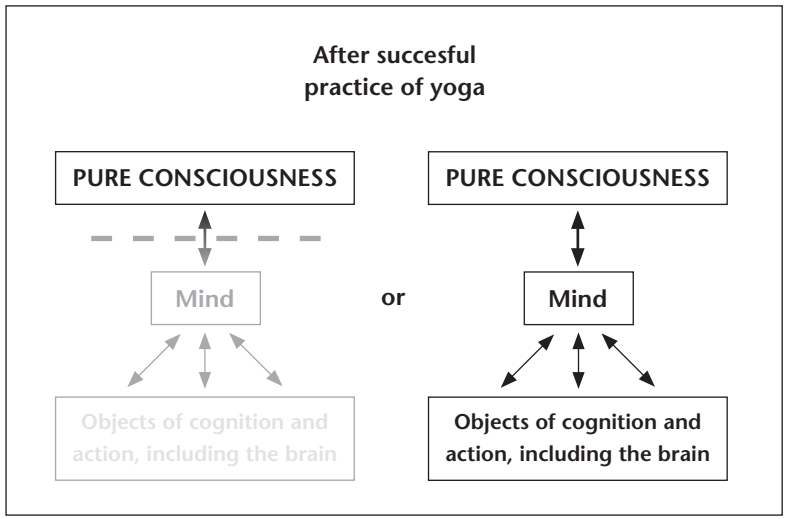

Figure 13.3. Third stage of the metatheory, two accounts.

Scientific status of the metatheory

According to the vast majority of Indian scholars, ancient (Cārvāka being an exception) as well as contemporary, the metatheory itself is not open to falsification. Does that exclude it from scientific inquiry? I do not think so. The metatheory might be given a similar status as the (Darwinian) theory of evolution, or its aspect more relevant here—evolutionary psychology (for example, Barkow, Cosmides, & Tooby, 1988). Evolutionary theory per se cannot currently be falsified and as in the metatheory of Indian psychology, there are different approaches that, for instance, differ in the unit to which selection processes apply—the individual, the group, or the single gene (for example, Dawkins, 1990). Although, according to the lines of thought advanced by Lakatos (1970), if a better theory will be found, evolutionary theory should eventually be replaced by that theory. The same might be expected for the metatheory of Indian psychology, if after considerable unsuccessful attempts to find evidence for the predictions derived from it, another theory came up with better explanations—although that seems to be practically impossible, because many of the passages in the *Vedic* scriptures are quite ambiguous.

Can the more specific theories, such as the six orthodox systems, variations thereof, and the heterodox systems be falsified? That should actually be possible,

because they are usually much more specific than the *Vedic* scriptures and they—at least in part—make different statements and predictions about the same or similar issues.[4] One might expect divided opinions here, though. Whereas adherents of a given system might not allow the possibility of its falsification, adherents of other systems might. This, too, is quite reminiscent of the way mainstream science works (Kuhn, 1970). However, in the long run, wrong theories that are open to scientific scrutiny will either have to be changed or will be dismissed (or will simply be forgotten) because of the pressure towards the advancement of knowledge in the scientific community. But should the scientific method be applied at all to Indian psychology? Let us look at the answer of the famous *Vedāntin* Swami Vivekananada who, as many Indian scholars, equates religion with philosophy and psychology: 'In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of the opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better.' (cited after Swami Jitatmananda, 2004, p. 171). In sum, although there might be opposition to this view, depending on which theory is under scrutiny, the theoretical approaches of Indian psychology are in principle falsifiable and can therefore be tested by using the scientific method.

Indian psychology: Possible hypotheses

According to the scientific method, theories and hypotheses or questions derived from them are the basis of the scientific enterprise. In the ideal case, methods should be custom-tailored to a given hypothesis. This ideal will seldom be reached but there exists a panacea of methods in psychology from which suitable tools can be selected. Even if at first glance there were no such suitable methods to examine a given hypothesis at the moment, this is no reason at all to stop the scientific endeavour at this point because history has shown again and again, that if there are good theories, good methodological instruments will follow eventually. So even if it seems that hypotheses derived from Indian psychology currently lack adequate methodological tools to examine them, this should be no hindrance to think about possible hypotheses without any restrictions. On the other side, if there is no theory, the best tools are worthless. In fact, all the kinds of hypotheses discussed below are—in my opinion—at least partly open to examination by currently available methods (see paragraph on 'Methodological issues').

Throughout the paragraph the hypotheses are formulated as questions, because questions are more general than hypotheses (for example, the hypothesis 'god exists' is fully dealt with in the question 'does god exist?' but the question also includes the hypothesis 'god does not exist'). Whenever I was aware of any, I included evidence accumulated for specific hypotheses. The collection of hypotheses is certainly far from complete and I might have missed some very interesting ones. Also, the hypotheses are not ordered according to importance because different scholars may have quite different rankings in this respect. The main purpose is to open up (and also to make suggestions for summarizing) possibilities for

meaningful research on Indian psychology. I will begin with 'existential' hypotheses about the metatheory. Most hypotheses are, however, related to *yoga*, the collection of methods that is part of the metatheory, and most of these hypotheses deal with intermediate states on the way. In addition, I have also included examples of hypotheses that are derived from specific theories of Indian psychology. In same cases, these hypotheses allow a test of one theory against another, if they differ in their predictions. This is followed by some examples of hypotheses about differences between the Western and the Indian approaches.

Basic existential hypotheses

For Indian scholars, the following two hypotheses might sound ridiculous, but for many Western academic scientists it will not be easy to accept the corresponding claims a priori, that is, without some systematic empirical evidence.

Does pure consciousness exist at all? The best evidence to answer that question in the affirmative would be to show that some persons exist or existed that really reached the state of pure consciousness. In Indian texts, usually several examples for persons that have attained pure consciousness are cited, very prominently among them Buddha, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Sri Ramana Maharshi. Zen Buddhist texts list many historic Zen masters and usually, becoming an authorized Zen master means to have attained enlightenment (see Kapleau, 1989), although sometimes there remains doubt about whether some persons who claim to be enlightened really have attained that state (AMA Samy, 2002, p. 17). There are also Western texts that have collected evidence. For instance, Bucke (1961) lists several historical personalities (among them some Americans whom he knew personally—the book was originally published in 1901) for having reached 'cosmic consciousness', and he himself also claimed to have had an experience of that sort. His criteria for what an experience of cosmic conscience is seem to be largely based on his own experience, because there is no systematic discussion of these criteria in the short biographies his book mainly consists of. However, although the experience Bucke describes was certainly very remarkable, it cannot be equated with pure consciousness, because there is still duality in the state he describes (d'Aquili & Newberg, 2000), but some of the persons whose life he describes might be generally regarded as having attained liberation. So one interesting question might be: 'What is common among the experiences of persons that claim (or whose followers claim for them) to have achieved pure consciousness?' If one cannot find such common characteristics, several conclusions are possible. There is, of course the—rather implausible—conclusion, that there is no such state. Second, whereas some of these persons might have acquired pure consciousness, others might not, or not to the end. Third, there might be different ways in which an experience of pure consciousness shows itself. This conclusion is logically difficult, because pure consciousness is usually defined as the absence of all attributes and so there cannot be different kinds of it, but that does not exclude that the same experience is communicated in different ways. One could also argue that the issue is not really

decidable, so why take the troubles? In any case, a systematic collection of criteria and characteristics might help to come closer to the truth than the mostly anecdotal evidence available so far. It might also make possible to construct a common 'vertical structure'—the steps that have to be passed in order to obtain the state of pure consciousness—in spiritual experiences described in different systems.

Is pure consciousness just a special brain state, selected for by evolution? An answer to the affirmative is hinted at in the works of d'Aquili and Newberg (for example, d'Aquili & Newberg, 1993; 1998; 2000; Newberg, d'Aquili, & Rause, 2002). These authors argue, similar to many theories included in the metatheory, that there is a progression of spiritual states culminating in the state of absolute unitary experience (AUB). They suggest that the progressive blocking of neural input to the posterior superior parietal lobe and adjacent areas (especially on the non-dominant side) leads to a decreased sense of self and other, a decreased sense of space and time, and to an increased sense of unity among discrete objects. If input is totally blocked, AUB, that is, a sense of pure consciousness arises. They present some evidence for their case in showing increased blood flow after meditation in certain brain areas for highly experienced meditators, that is, Tibetan Buddhists (Newberg et al., 1997) and Franciscan nuns (Newberg et al., 2003). In Newberg et al. (2002) they offer an evolutionary explanation: Persons who reached the AUB state by blocking the respective neural input (for example, after fasting and staying alone in solitude for a prolonged period) were instrumental in the creation of religions. The religion, in turn, enforced the bonds of the respective clan, thus providing a selection advantage for the respective group. So their evolutionary argument focuses on groups—groups with individuals who have achieved AUB have a selection advantage. According to Newberg et al. (2002, p. 125) the 'neurological machinery of transcendence', that is, the respective brain mechanisms, might not have evolved for the purpose of experiencing AUB per se but might have arisen from the neural circuitry that evolved for mating and sexual experiences. This argument rests on the analogy between words with which sexual experiences and experiences by mystics are described: *bliss*, *rapture*, *ecstasy*, and *exaltation*. However, in the end they remain somewhat indecisive and do not really make a strong commitment for their view that pure consciousness is just a special brain state, selected for by evolution. One way to test their hypothesis would be—if that is possible without side effects—to induce a blocking of the respective brain regions and examine whether a subjective state consistent with AUB is experienced. It would be especially fortunate if persons could be found who have experienced that state—they could compare their experiences found the 'natural way' (for example, by meditation) with what they experienced the 'artificial way' (by the induced blocking of the neural pathways). Another possibility to test the hypothesis about 'why god won't go away' (the title of the Newberg et al. 2002 book) is to look for evidence outside the individual, because according to this hypothesis, everything happens inside the individual's brain. If, as many theories postulate, supernormal phenomena that include other persons are connected with higher

mind-states, then showing a single convincing evidence of such paranormal states would refute the most extreme version of this 'pure-consciousness-is-in-the-brain' hypothesis.

Hypotheses about the impact of yoga

Which effects does the practice of *yoga* have on a person? As almost all varieties of *yoga*, including Buddhist meditation practices, refer in some way to Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtras* (for example, Shukla, 2004) one might use the *Yoga-Sūtras* as a basis for predictions or questions.[5] All these predictions are about change or transformation and there are basically two ways about going to examine change. One is a one-shot method where one compares persons with a different amount of practice (or some other relevant difference), and the other is to conduct a long-term-study within a given person. The first option is much more convenient and that may be the reason why most studies I am aware of used that way. In the simplest case, one would compare two groups, one group that practices *yoga* and another (control-) group that does not. The main methodological problem here is that of controlling alternative explanations—the problem of internal validity mentioned above. The second way is much more difficult, for practical reasons (the collaboration between *yoga*-practitioner and researcher may have to last many years) and for methodological reasons (see the paragraph on 'Methodological issues'). However, in the long run, insights will be very limited if only the first approach will be followed. As spelled out in the metatheory, the main effect of *yoga* is to cut off or transform the connections between mind and sensory stimulation. So, for instance, negative emotions or 'thinking errors' should have less and less influence on the mind, and the weakening connection between mind and senses should also be observable in physiological measures.

Can the senses be shut out by practitioners of yoga? As the main aim of *yoga* is the separation of the mind from the senses, even adverse stimuli should have less and less effect on the mind. Several studies have been conducted to examine this hypothesis. For instance, Anand et al. (1961, cited in R. J. Mathew, 2001, p. 227) administered strong stimuli (strong light, loud banging noise, contact with a hot glass tube, ice-cold water, and a tuning fork) to experienced *rāja yogīs*. They found only minimal changes in EEG despite the adverseness of the stimuli, and the pattern was also quite different from the EEG-patterns obtained during sleep. Also, in a study with Zen monks, it was found that they lack the usual EEG-responses to sensory stimulation: they did not habituate to repeated exposures of the stimuli, which could mean that they did not process them in the usual way (Kasamatsu & Hirai, 1966).

Are bodily functions drastically altered? Patañjali and several later sources from Zen and Advaita Vedānta postulate that in the course of successfully practicing *yoga* techniques, breathing slows down and becomes imperceptible when the mind is in the state of pure consciousness (Shear & Jevning, 1999, p. 196). This hypothesis also entails that metabolic activity should decrease considerably when meditators

come close to separating the mind from the senses. Indeed, several studies have found that in advanced meditation, the pulse, as well as the metabolic rate are markedly reduced and respiration becomes basically imperceptible (Badawi et al., 1984; Farrow & Hebert, 1982; Travis & Wallace, 1997). As there have been numerous studies done already on this topic (for a comprehensive summary see Murphy, Donovan, & Taylor, 1997; see also Austin, 1998; Delmonte, 1985; Murray, 1982), a systematic summary of everything around—if possible in the form of one or several meta-analyses (for example, Hunter & Schmidt, 1990)—might be a good idea before conducting further studies on open or undecided questions. A systematic analysis and interpretation of the results obtained for this general hypothesis might be a good starting point for making Indian psychology known to a wider audience.

Do the five kleśas (hindrances, difficulties) become less pronounced? According to the *yoga* philosophy, the five *kleśas* are the causes of misery (see second book of *Yoga-Sūtras*, for example, Woods, 1998; Raju, 1983, pp. 593-594). The hindrances are ignorance (*avidyā*), the feeling that one is so-and-so (*asmitā*), attachment (*rāga*), hate (*dveṣa*), and the desire to continue to be what one is (*abhiniveṣa*). With increasing *yoga* practice, these five hindrances should lose more and more weight. Similar claims are made by Buddhist contemplatives. They would, for instance, expect that with progressing practice in meditation, afflictive emotional states such as aggression and craving occur less frequently and are of briefer duration (Wallace, 1999, p. 185). Many hypotheses referring to the receding of negative attitudes or emotions can be derived from these very general hypotheses. Also for the examination of this hypothesis, a meta-analysis (for example, based on the respective listings of Murphy et al., 1997) might be a good start.

Do practitioners of yoga attain paranormal abilities? The third book of the *Yoga-Sūtras* deals in detail with the attainment of supernormal power (for example, Woods, 1998). Upon mastery of fixed-attention, contemplation and concentration, practitioners of the *yoga* method can be expected to have many such abilities, among them to be able to see into the future, read the thoughts of other persons, and make their bodies indiscernible (see also Paranjpe, 1982). Again, similar claims are made for Tibetan Buddhists who have attained the state of pure consciousness. Apart from the above, the abilities postulated include various forms of extrasensory perception, recalling one's previous lifetimes, moving through solid objects, walking on water, or multiplying one's own forms (Wallace, 1999, p. 185). There seems to be already some preliminary evidence in favour of the general hypothesis (and also against it) from systematic studies, but the empirical basis, at least as systematic research attempts are concerned is still rather scarce (Ramakrishna Rao, 1982; Ramakrishna Rao, Dukhan & Krishna Rao, 1978). However, recent meta-analyses provide convincing evidence for small but highly replicable effects (see Storm, Tressoldi & Di Risio, 2010; Utts, 1991).

Can yoga be successfully used in the treatment of drug addicts? Certain drugs seem to induce states of consciousness similar to those obtained with *yoga* practices. Since early times, people are susceptible to these effects of drugs, and drugs such as *sura* or *bhāng* are already mentioned in the *Vedas* (R. J. Mathew, 2001). Drugs may primarily have sedative, stimulating, or dissociative effects, but all can arouse some kind of euphoria. These euphoric states can be linked with altered states of consciousness (R. J. Mathew, 2001)—sedative drugs (for example, alcohol) release consciousness from inhibition, stimulating drugs (for example, cocaine) stimulate consciousness directly by expanding and enlarging it, and dissociative drugs (for example, ayahuasca, marijuana, peyote, or LSD) can produce a variety of 'religious feelings' connected with depersonalization and unification, among others (Schultes & Hoffmann, 1992; Shanon, 2001). One might see all these effects as weakening the connection between the mind and the objects of reality similar to what the practice of *yoga* is supposed to yield (see Figure 13.2). This similarity between the effects of drugs and those of *yoga* suggests the hypothesis that the practice of *yoga* might turn out to be a very potent therapy for drug addicts.

Does the practice of yoga have social implications? Yoga is a method for the individual, and not for the society. Therefore, one would not expect much impact for society from the practice of *yoga*. And in fact, the common tendency in India to neglect everyday life in favour of spirituality (except in the school of Mīmāṁsā) is commonly deplored (for example, Raju, 1962; Sri Aurobindo, 2001, chapter III). However, this is not totally consistent even with what the proponents of Advaita Vedānta, the most dominant school of Indian thought (and also the one which is commonly seen as rejecting the world most) taught. Already according to Śaṅkara, Advaita stands for both social welfare (*abhyudaya*) and spiritual progress (*niśreyas*) and Neo-Vedāntins such as Swami Vivekananda make an even stronger case: He derived the ideal of universal brotherhood from the *advaitic* view that *Brahman* and individual are basically the same, irrespective of the individuals' differences, demographic or otherwise (Srinivas, 2004). Similar views are also held by Zen Buddhists (for example, AMA Samy, 2002). However, the most radical and explicit view about social consequences of *yoga* is held by Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga. According to this school, 'the liberated individual has one occupation and this is to deliver God in his fellow beings, and all else is secondary to him' (Jayashanmugam, 2002, p. 38). It seems, however, hard to derive precise hypotheses from these accounts, except that society will somehow profit from an increasing number of people who practice *yoga*. Also here, a systematic collection of the schools' social impacts would—if not already done with me not being aware of it—be very helpful for doing systematic research on the issues.

Which method for whom? As there are many varieties of *yoga*, it might be helpful for beginners to find out quickly which method suits them best. This question would become especially important if Indian psychology would be successfully accepted by the West, because the practical consequence then would probably be a strongly

increased demand for education in *yoga*. One hypothesis already elaborated in the *Dharma-Śāstras* is a connection between predominance of one of the three *guṇas*—the three aspects of temperament postulated in the Sāṁkhya school—in a person and the kind of *yoga* method that is best suited for that person. According to that source, persons high in *sattva* (knowledge) should chose *jñāna yoga*, those high in *rajas* (action) *karma yoga* and those high in *tamas* (inertia), *bhakti yoga* (Raju, 1985). There are already several existing scales that allow the measurement of the three *guṇas'* relative strength (Daftuar & Anjali, 1997; V. G. Mathew, 2001; Sitamma, Sridevi, & Krishna Rao, 1995; Wolf, 1998).

Hypotheses derived from specific Indian theories

To adherents of a given theory of Indian psychology, that theory is probably much more relevant than the metatheory outlined above, and there is, of course, the possibility that the 'best' theory already exists. However, at the moment, it cannot be expected that all informed experts would agree on such a best theory (adherents of different theories might not even agree on who is an 'expert'). One way to recommend a theory to potential practitioners would be to actually test hypotheses derived from that specific theory and thereby try to corroborate that theory. The six orthodox (as well as the heterodox) systems differ in a multitude of ways, but the differences are partly due to their relying on different parts of the *Vedic* scriptures (Raju, 1962; Sharma, 2003). However, there are also some differences on the same topics. For instance, schools differ in whether they assume that cause and effect are the same or different in nature, whether there is one or many Selves, or whether liberation can be attained while alive or only after death. In the following, I give just three arbitrary examples out of potentially very many hypotheses that can be derived from specific theories of Indian psychology. The third hypothesis given below is one that compares two different theories.

Do the stages postulated by Tibetan Buddhist psychology accord with the experience of practitioners? Wallace (1999) lists nine quite clearly defined attentional states that according to Buddhist psychology are attained successively in the *samatā* training. For each of the nine states, specific achievements are specified. One could now examine, whether the successive attainment of the stages is common for all practitioners or whether there are shortcuts for some and not for others, or whether there are pronounced differences in the time practitioners need to attain these states and whether these differences can be linked to differences in personality or other variables (see Dubs, 1987 for an attempt to do so for Soto-Zen meditators).

Does meditation on certain cakras produce the postulated effects? In Tantra and *kuṇḍalinī yoga*, concentration on one of the nine major *cakras* plays an important role. These *cakras* are said to be connected to different bodily, emotional, and spiritual effects. For instance, it is postulated that meditation on the *lalanā cakra*

(forehead *cakra*) helps to cure neurotic and psychotic disorders and is therefore of great importance to psychologists (Mukhopadhyay & Renukadevi, 2004, p. 133). Analogously hypotheses can be specified for the other *cakras*.

Is analogy recognized by inference or associatively? This question could be from one of the mainstream psychology journals in the West, but actually it is an example of how systems of Indian psychology can hold different views about aspects of cognition. Whereas the Sāṁkhya school holds that analogical judgments use inference mechanisms, the Nyāya school contends that analogies can be recognized immediately in a way we would term associative (Raju, 1983; Sharma, 2003). A test of this differential hypothesis could be pursued by using methods from mainstream psychology, resorting, for instance, to reaction time measures.

Differential hypotheses between Indian and Western psychology

The most important difference between the Indian and the Western approach seems to be about the existence of pure consciousness as postulated by the former. However, as far as 'normal life' is concerned, ancient Indian psychology, especially as expressed in the systems of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika have astonishingly parallel views with modern Western psychology (for example, Raju, 1983; Sharma, 2003). But there are also some striking differences. For instance, in contemporary Western cognitive psychology, the relationship between brain and mind is seldom explicitly spelled out, but if one would press researchers to make a statement, most would probably resort to the view that cognitive processes co-vary with brain processes, and if pressed still harder, some might say that essentially brain processes produce cognitions and emotions (for example, Damasio, 1999). The Indian view is just the opposite: the brain is used as an instrument by the mind (for example, Raju, 1983).

Does the mind use the brain or is the reverse true? This is a very interesting question, which cannot easily be tested. One might, however, try to find evidence for whether mind exists independently from brain. If the brain is the basis for the mind, there should be no mind if the brain is dead. So a good starting point to examine the hypothesis might be to look for evidence on near-death experiences or on reincarnation (for some attempts do to so see Cook, Greyson, & Stevenson, 1998; Stevenson, 1987).

Do the senses connect to their 'sense-objects'? In Indian psychology, at least in the systems of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, Sāṁkhya, and Mīmāṁsā, it is assumed that the senses go out to their objects and contact them or even 'become' the objects (for example, Raju, 1983). Therefore, sense-organs such as the eye or the nose that do not really touch their objects seem to be not the whole story according to the Indian view. So one might, for instance, hypothesize that even if the visual sense in the Western understanding does not work any longer, the remaining part of the visual sense in the Indian understanding might still be functioning and

an (incomplete) perception might be the result. This hypothesis might open up some interesting links to phenomena such as 'blindsight' (for example, Cowey, 2004).

Can several senses produce cognitions simultaneously? The schools of Indian psychology hold that sense-organs can only work in connection with the mind. The mind, however, at least according to the Nyāya school, can only serve one sense organ at a time (Raju, 1983, p. 601). At a first glance, this is contradicted by synaesthetic experiences reported in the psychological literature. It might, however, be worthwhile to have a closer look at these reports and check whether the simultaneousness of experiences reported there could be explained by a rapid succession of different experiences (see Srinivas & Krishna Mohan, 2004).

Is yoga more efficient than Western psychotherapy, are there differential effects? This hypothesis is only marginal from the standpoint of the metatheory (the main aim of *yoga* is to attain pure consciousness and not to heal psychological or mental disorders), but it has probably received the highest amount of attention among Westerners, and also among Indian psychologists (Krishna Rao, 1995). Early on, psychoanalysts were interested in *yoga* as, for instance, a means to increase happiness in life (Coster, 1998). The interest in *yoga* and derivates such as Zen meditation is nowadays widespread in the therapeutic community, but it seems that only a few systematic studies have been conducted to find out more about the differential beneficial effects of *yoga* as compared to traditional Western approaches (Shapiro & Zifferblatt, 1976). For instance, a few studies compared the effects of Zen meditation with conventional relaxation techniques in the reduction of anxiety and found no differential effects with a week-long treatment (Goldman, Domitor, & Murray, 1979), but marked effects for both approaches already after 6 weeks with an advantage of Zen meditation over relaxation training in a scale that measured participants' degree of interpersonal problems (Tloczinki & Tantiella, 1998; see also Dubs, 1987). Finding out more about differential effects and conditions for effectiveness of different approaches should be in the interest of the probably very many therapists who already practice a combination of approaches (and in the interest of the public, of course).

Status of the hypotheses

Due to my rather scarce knowledge about the topic, I might have omitted substantial bodies of evidence for some of the hypotheses discussed above, but still, it seems that the existing evidence is quite insufficient or at least has to be analysed and summarized systematically for most of the hypotheses. An exception might be the hypotheses on the physiological correlates of states of concentration and meditation. But here also, a systematic summary would have a much higher impact on the scientific community than the scattered evidence in a wide variety of sometimes rather obscure journals. One reason why some of the hypotheses outlined above—especially those dealing with specific states of consciousness—have

received so little interest from academic psychologists might also be due to a perceived lack of suitable methods. In the next paragraph I will argue that there are indeed methodological problems that, however, can be solved in principle by putting in additional effort.

Methodological issues

Now that some hypotheses from Indian psychology have been derived, the next steps according to the scientific method (Figure 13.1) are the operationalization of the variables involved, the design of the study, data collection, and data analysis. I have already dealt with issues of operationalization and design above, but the operationalization of the dependent variables (the variables by which the effect of the causal variables is determined) needs some more comment. These variables are operationalized by some measure of behaviour which can also be a subjective experience.[6] Often, researchers are not so much interested in the behaviour or experience itself but in the underlying constructs such as memory functions, emotions, cognitions. So the biggest difficulty in the operationalization of dependent variables is to establish a sound connection between behavioural or experiential measures (for example, some measure of blood flow in the brain, or some measure of emotionality) and the underlying suspected 'real' variable (for example, attention, or happiness). Academic psychology has developed several tools to ensure that measurement makes sense, among them *measurement theory*, which defines what a meaningful measurement is (for example, Steyer & Eid, 1993), *test theory*, which specifies criteria for constructing sound psychological tests and questionnaires (for example, Lienert & Raatz, 1994), and a variety of *multidimensional procedures* that seek to connect observable behaviour to the underlying constructs or 'latent variables' (for example, Backhaus et al., 2000). All these procedures can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative data. Although in mainstream research, the dominating design involves the comparison of groups, single-case designs, which are probably needed for many of the hypotheses outlined above, are by no means uncommon, especially with populations whose members are hard to get (for example, people with rare diseases, CEOs, *yogīs*). If the design is fixed, also the data collection stage is basically fixed, although in real research modifications may be necessary in between (for example, if participants do not show up or get sick, if instruments break down, or if new insights arise in the course of the study). The analysis of the data and the interpretation of the results are, of course, also determined by the hypothesis. But for data analysis, there are many possibilities, with a major distinction being between quantitative and qualitative methods, which are concerned both with measurement and data analysis.

Quantitative versus qualitative methods

In the methods literature, quantitative and qualitative approaches in psychological research are sometimes treated as totally separate, and this view is often expressed already in the titles of textbooks (with a strong dominance of the word

'quantitative'). However, if one looks at what researchers really do or have done, qualitative and quantitative methods co-existed all the time (for example, Pope & Mays, 1995) and the distinction is to a certain extent artificial (Stoppard, 2002). Academic psychology in Germany actually started with what one would today call qualitative research. Interestingly, in many studies in which the method of introspection was used, the 'subject' was the professor and the interviewer was often his assistant (for example, Bühler, 1907; Lück & Miller, 2002). It was thought that the introspectionist had to be more highly skilled than the interviewer, to make the subjective data he produced meaningful. In contrast to the views of some critics of Western psychology, subjective experiences still play an important role even in mainstream psychology. Especially if a new line of research is introduced, explorative interviews dominate the beginning phase and all considerate experimenters ask their participants to explain their impressions, experiences, and motivations in experiments in their own words. Interviews of different types also play an important role in developmental and organizational, as well as in clinical research. But often, what persons say is not left as is, but is restructured or quantified. This involves elaborating adequate categories and scales. So quantification is rather the end product of a data analysis that might begin qualitatively. Data, be they utterances, observations, counts, etc., often do not speak for themselves—they only make sense in the light of an idea or a theory. Even verbal data do not come out of the void, but are usually responses to questions which, in turn, are motivated by at least a rudimentary form of 'theory' or idea.

Qualitative methods do not always yield numbers in the end. There are also qualitative researchers who shy away from quantification on principle, because they feel that the analysis of experiences, attitudes, and views of the research participants may not yield any meaningful numbers. In some cases, such as when little is known about a given topic or when the aim of the research is to generate new hypotheses or theories, quantification does indeed not make much sense. It is true, however, that qualitative data analysis is often done more or less ad hoc, because scholars lack adequate training. This led to an emphasis on 'the old methods' (Aiken, West, Sechrest, & Reno, 1990), which are not so seldom applied ritualistically, without much thought (Salsburg, 1985). This state of affairs seems to be slowly changing, especially in applied settings and in domains that rely heavily on verbal protocols; but systematic qualitative approaches such as discourse analysis, grounded theory, or content analysis (see Richardson, 1996; Smith, 2003; Wood & Kroger, 2000) still play a marginal role in the journals considered most important by mainstream psychologists (Rennie, Watson, & Monteiro, 2002). Apart from the lack of knowledge about suitable qualitative methods, another reason for the reluctance of mainstream researchers to use qualitative methods is probably the emphasis of some qualitative researchers on a 'social constructionist' position, that is, the assumption, that reality is, at least in part, socially constructed and does not exist independently of culture and social environment (Stoppard, 2002). But even with a social constructivist approach, the scientific method (Figure 13.1) still holds, irrespective of whether a quantitative or a qualitative approach to

measurement and data analysis is used. Meanwhile, qualitative methods are also regularly taught in universities in UK and Canada (Stoppard, 2002) and I personally know of several programmes in Germany and Austria. In sum: although qualitative methods—which often use highly subjective data—currently do not play a dominant role in mainstream psychological research, they are a widely accepted part of psychology's methods arsenal. Whether these methods will thrive more in the future depends on whether they show some advantage in the examination of specific questions or hypotheses. The hypotheses derived from Indian psychology may be a case in point.

First-, second-, and third-person methods

In a sense, all our perception is subjective, irrespective of whether one takes the Eastern view in which the mind reaches out towards the objects via the senses, or the prevalent Western view, in which a stimulation of the sense organs has to be processed by the brain—a direct or really objective perception is impossible according to both accounts. Both accounts have also extensively dealt with possible errors arising from the subjectivity of our perception (for example, Sharma, 2003; Goldstein, 1999). The problem can be minimized if perception is 'externalized' to a measurement device such as scales, meters or other indicators of physical properties as usually done in the natural sciences. A person outside the physical process or phenomenon to be observed (for example, voltage, duration, weight), a 'third person' is able to make quite accurate judgments. This 'third person' could in principle be any observer, but in practice, especially if some theoretical knowledge is required to understand what is going on, third persons have to undergo substantial training. Third-person methods, as taken from the natural sciences, are also quite widespread in psychology. For instance, two of the main criteria of goodness in constructing psychological tests are *objectivity* (it should not matter who conducts the test, who evaluates the test results, and irrelevant information should not play any role), and *reliability* (for example, if the test is administered again, the same outcome should be observed, given an unchanged state of affairs). Also, all possible influences of the experimenter in psychological research are usually regarded as 'nuisance variables' and should be strictly controlled. This makes sense for examining a wide variety of psychological hypotheses, and often, the possible values of nuisance variables (for example demographic variables of experimenter, information about participants) are systematically varied to see how they influence research outcomes. More recently, a new approach to nuisance variables has been developed. Nuisance variables are now increasingly incorporated into computer models that simulate how humans think, feel, and act (for example, McLeod, Plunkett, & Rolls, 1998) or—to give a specific example—how a sense of self might come about (Nowak, et al., 2000).

However, third-person methods have their limitations in psychology because, as Velmans (2001) has argued nicely, experimenters and 'subjects' or observers and observed persons can in principle exchange roles, in contrast to the situation in physics or chemistry. This is the more a problem, the less strictly meaningful

measurements can be defined a priori. For instance, when more 'technical' hypotheses about the impact of meditation are examined, measures such as blood flow, respiration, or EEG patterns can be well defined and third-person methods are quite adequate. A similar argument would hold for studies in which the therapeutic effectiveness of *yoga* is compared to a different approach. If, however, one wants to find out about changes in consciousness, third-person methods do not make much sense for at least three reasons. First, if the interrogation procedure is fixed a priori, very likely important information will be missed. Second, the role of a detached observer does not work in this case: there has to be a good 'rapport' between the persons involved in this kind of research, otherwise again, important information may not be disclosed (Vermersch, 1999). And finally, it will not do to have an arbitrary researcher do the interviewing. Even if the relationship among the person observed and the observer is good, if the interviewer does not have adequate experiences and knowledge herself, chances are that important information will be missed or misunderstood. One could now argue that all these problems are solved if the observer is identical with the observed, that is, by applying 'first-person methods'. This may work in some exceptionally well-trained individuals, but already directing ones attention to one's own mental states usually changes these (Velmans, 2001). Moreover, expectations, belief systems and personal views, as well as social and cultural factors add many more problems to the first-person approach. This leaves as a third option a kind of compromise between third- and first-persons methods: 'second-person methods'.[7] The 'second person' must be experienced, knowledgeable, on good personal terms with the 'first person' and, last not least, well trained in a suitable method—in the words of Varela and Shear (1999, p. 10), 'an empathic resonator with experiences that are familiar to him and which find in himself a resonant chord.' Such second-person methods have, at least sometimes, been applied in the beginning of academic psychology in Germany, where highly educated post-docs observed the professors' verbal associations (Lück & Miller, 2002). However, in the course of time, the expert participants were replaced by 'naïve' participants with the college student as the prototypical 'subject'. In recent times, there seems to be a revival of the approach, largely motivated by research having to do with different aspects of consciousness (see the Feb/March issue of *Volume 6*, of the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 1999). Well-founded second-person approaches to study consciousness are proposed by Depraz (1999), Petitmengin-Peugot (1999), and Vermersch (1999). Common to all these approaches is the necessity of a substantial amount of practice as a pre-requisite to apply the method. All of these methods fulfill the two conditions postulated by Varela & Shear (1999, p. 6):

1. Providing a clear *procedure* for accessing some phenomenal domain.
2. Providing a clear means for an *expression and validation* within a community of observers who have familiarity with procedures as in the previous point.

Validation can either be done by having several 'second persons' interact with the

same participant, having one 'second person' interact with several participants, or a combination of the two. Who can be a second person in research on suitable hypotheses derived from Indian psychology? Certainly the *guru* as suggested by Ramakrishna Rao (2004), which would also include Zen masters, who often use meditators' attempted solutions for *Koans* as diagnostic yardsticks for progress. However, the most common case for a second person in this kind of research will probably be the interested researcher, trained in a suitable second-person method and experienced in at least some practice of *yoga* (see Wallace, 1999).

Potential problems with second-person methods

There are at least three potential problems with the use of second-person methods. The first concerns the potential participants. There should be no problem finding interested practitioners of *yoga* in the beginning or even intermediate stages, but it may be hard to find really advanced *yogīs*. And even if such persons can be located, they might not be willing to be subjected to a second-person kind of enquiry. In addition, samples might be highly selective and therefore the results might not be representative. However, there are some indications that at least practitioners of Zen, Tibetan Buddhist meditators, and adherents of *Transcendental meditation* based on Advaita Vedānta are generally willing to participate, irrespective of the status they have reached (Brown & Engler, 1980; Dubs, 1987; Gillani & Smith, 2001; Shear & Jevning, 1999; Wallace, 1999). After all, practitioners, especially if they have been socialized in a Western culture might want to seek some confirmation that a method they have invested considerable time and effort in, really works according to their expectations. Others might be interested in propagating their own method, which is—at least in the West—much easier to propagate, if it is backed by scientific evidence; and—the best case—some practitioners might be intrinsically motivated.

The second problem concerns the method itself. Nisbett and Wilson (1977) published a highly influential article on the accuracy of verbal reports in studies that examined social judgment tasks. After reviewing the evidence, they claimed to have shown that introspectionists may not have access to higher order cognitive processes, and that the accuracy of subjective verbal reports is generally very poor. Some 10 years later, White (1988) published another (much less influential) review in which he showed that Nisbett and Wilson's analysis was methodologically flawed; and he also presented some positive evidence, concluding that the issue is far from closed. A similar conclusion is also drawn by Ericsson and Simon (1984), who discuss several factors that can be expected to have an impact on the validity of verbal reports. The studies analysed by Nisbett and Wilson (1977) as well as White (1988) used naïve participants and observers not especially trained in assisting in the introspectionist process. So, one might not expect tremendously good results anyway. But what about the attempts to introspection in early German psychology as, for instance, practiced in the Würzburg school, some of which might justifiably be called 'second-person method'? Why were these attempts given up afterwards? Vermersch (1999) argues that the main reason may have

been that the theories held were too weak for the data. He also discusses other objections to introspection but argues that although the method is rarely used in academia, practitioners in psychology still use it for teaching, remedial action, re-education, training, coaching, therapy, etc., which should be an indicator of its usefulness. The crucial point, according to Vermersch (1999) is that a solid second-person introspectionist procedure needs considerable training on the side of the second person. Overall, the evidence against the method of introspection is not convincing; and for the kind of introspection-studies needed to examine some of the hypotheses of Indian psychology, there is just no evidence yet. But anyway, 'nothing is gained by refusing the entire enterprise because of some a priori argument.' (Varela & Shear, 1999, p. 14).

Also the third problem is such an a priori argument. Second-person methods are embedded in the scientific method (Figure 13.1). This method works on the intellectual level but at least some of the hypotheses listed above are concerned with the level of pure consciousness which, according to all theories considered here, is not thoroughly understandable by the ordinary mind. So the problem is whether a methodology that is based on the mind can reach beyond the mind. A possible solution to this problem might be seen in Figures 13.2 and 13.3—according to the metatheory, there is always the possibility to connect the mind to pure consciousness; and this connection grows stronger with an increasing practice of *yoga*. So if both the interviewer and the interviewee using a second-person method have reached a higher state of consciousness, the interviewer could use the mind to express his or her (possibly intuitive) experiences, could analyse them systematically and finally communicate them. If the interviewer has not reached that higher state but the interviewee has, the 'data' might be less perfect but still very useful to further scientific knowledge about states of higher consciousness.[8] It seems to me that the limitations lie not so much in the interviewer as a deficient 'measurement device' but in the translation of the interviewer's experiences (and, of course, also the interviewee's utterances) into an apt language for the communication of the results. Science, however, depends on some kind of language, be it natural language or a more formalized one. This dependence on language is certainly a limitation of the scientific method when used to study higher states of consciousness, but it is the only means available. Unless a substantial part of humankind learns to communicate in an efficient nonverbal way, language is the only general way to pass on information, be it scientific or otherwise.

Appreciation of Indian psychology in the West

Indian psychology was early on recognized by analytical theory (for example, Coster, 1998) but it has never played a substantial role in Western academic psychology so far. There have always been a few researchers that tried to link the Western and the Indian view, though. For instance, already James (1898) mentioned a state of 'superconsciousness' (*samādhi*) but did not advance a really good explanation for it. Later on, James's work was not much taken up until the 1960s

and 1970s, and Indian psychology only gained some more interest through some physiologically oriented studies that connected aspects of consciousness with physiological measures (Peters, 1998).

In recent times, there has been increased interest, however, which might have at least two causes. One could be the wide dissemination of *yoga* and meditation techniques, by which chances have risen that academics might collect some first hand experiences. For instance, in the U.S., Buddhist meditation and Transcendental meditation seem to have been able to attract special attention recently (Pickering, 1997; Shear & Jevning, 1999). A second cause for the increased interest could be that even mainstream researchers are discontent with the current state of affairs in academic psychology. Discontent arises because psychologists—often out of quite practical reasons, such as the availability of grant money and tenure considerations—are too occupied with small fragmented questions which have the potential of alienating them from larger intellectual and human concerns (Bevan & Kessel, 1994). Also, there is a tendency of the scientist's role away from value-neutral research to being a participant in natural events (Bevan, 1991). This increased interest in practically oriented daily life matters can be seen in a renewed interest of academic psychology in the effects of religious practice and in at least three lines of research that have gained quite a lot of popularity recently. First, materialist values as the main cause for well-being are being questioned more and more by prominent mainstream psychologists (for example, Diener & Seligman, 2004, Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). Second, the central role of happiness in life and how it can be achieved found an expression in a new line of research termed *positive psychology*, which is 'an attempt to urge psychologists to adopt a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potentials, motives, and capacities' (Sheldon & King, 2001, p. 216; see also the other articles in the March issue, 2001 of the *American Psychologist*). And a third topic that finds increasing interest among psychologists is wisdom research (for example, Ardelt, 2004; Baltes & Kunzman, 2004). To the best of my knowledge, none of these new developments in the West takes yet account of Indian psychology but all these topics could be good interfaces for bringing together Indian and Western approaches (for example, Misra, Suvasini, & Srivastava, 2000), and they might serve as a starting point for a process which could eventually lead to a redefinition of psychology that appreciates the meditative mode of knowing and being (Rosch, 1997).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have put a heavy emphasis on methods, because a sound methodology is what makes the difference between lay psychology and the scientific approach to psychology. A rigorous test of the hypotheses derivable from Indian psychology is all the more necessary because of the abundance of publications on *yoga* and related issues in the West that do not meet even minimal scientific standards. The low quality of many of these publications (and of some institutions and private practices that propagate them) is certainly an important reason why Indian

psychology is not regarded as scientific by most academic psychologists who usually do not know much about its real background. In academic psychology there prevails a strong sentiment against 'theories' that rely heavily on authority and 'good stories'. This sentiment can, for instance, be witnessed in the fate of psychoanalysis, which is quite marginalized in academic psychology because it (still) is only partly open to falsification. If a system of thought is not in principle open to falsification it can—according to the view taken in this chapter—not be treated as a scientific theory. However, this must not be equated with a judgment about the value of the respective system—psychoanalysis has helped many people and also the practice of religion is increasingly recognized as helpful in daily life. Note that this recognition is due to research results *about* psychoanalysis and religion. Here the research was not concerned with testing the 'theories' as such but it was about effects, which, at least in the case of religion, were not predicted from the 'theory' itself but from a theory about the 'theory'.[9] In contrast, hypotheses derived from Indian psychology can in principle be examined rigorously, as has already been done to a limited extent (see examples cited earlier). Apart from holding up high methodological standards, I think it would speed up the dissemination of research results considerably if Indian psychologists tried more to publish their results in high ranking international journals or with well known publishing houses. These outlets are highly selective but guarantee high methodological standards; and therefore they are the main source of information for academic psychologists. The issue about where to publish research results is just a practicality and may not be to the taste of everybody. However, it would greatly enhance the perception of these results among a large group of researchers. Many scientists in the West who are (in the beginning) only marginally interested in a topic do not search actively for it—because of the time pressure in academia (publish or perish)—they do, however, routinely scan major journals and new books of renowned publishing houses. This all said, let me come back to the question implied in the title: How far can Western scientific methods and Indian psychology go together? In principle: all the way through; in practice: let us try our best!

Author's note

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Endnotes

1 So when one is looking for the genuine Indian psychology, one finds more experts in the philosophy departments than in the psychology departments. In ancient India (as in ancient Europe by the way), there was no division between philosophy, psychology (and religion).

2 Note that the term 'method' has a different meaning here—*yoga* is a collection of methods to *achieve some ends* (liberation) whereas research methods are used to *find out about something* (for example, about the specific effects of *yoga*).

3 As all meta-models, the above meta-theory of Indian psychology is heavily simplified and leaves out specific details that adherents of a given theory, which might be subsumed under the meta-model think of as most important. Just one example: In Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga, the division would be between the several gradations of mind and the *supermind*, which, in the vertical scale of that specific system precedes the three-leveled *saccidānanda* (Aurobindo 2001, p. 280).

4 Although here one might object that at least some of the six orthodox systems deal with different parts of the *Vedic* scriptures.

5 There is even evidence that the *Yoga-Sutras* might have been heavily influenced by Buddhism (Whiteman, 1993).

6 In fact, in German textbooks, the definitions of what psychology is about still often contain both the terms 'observations' and 'experiences' (Ponkratz, 1984). If one looks on its usage in the literature, the term 'observation' mostly used in American textbooks does meanwhile cover subjective experiences as well.

7 Note that while there is some correspondence between quantitative vs. qualitative and third-person vs. first- and second-person methods, third-person methods can also be applied to qualitative data and first- as well as second-person methods can in principle be used for quantitative data.

8 As outlined above, one prerequisite for the interviewer is at least some experience in the practice of yoga.

9 In the case of psychoanalysis, the question behind the research that established its effectiveness was motivated by the question whether psychotherapy was effective at all and whether different approaches differed in their effectiveness (for example, Smith & Glass, 1977).

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14

Integrating *yoga* epistemology and ontology into an expanded integral approach to research

William Braud

> *This new psychology looks to me very much like children learning some summary and not very adequate alphabet…and imagining that their first book of obscure beginnings…is the very heart of the real knowledge. They look from down up and explain the higher lights by the lower obscurities; but the foundation of these things is above and not below… The superconscient, not the subconscient, is the true foundation of things. The significance of the lotus is not to be found by analysing the secrets of the mud from which it grows here; its secret is to be found in the heavenly archetype of the lotus that blooms for ever in the Light above. … [You] must know the whole before you can know the part and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest. That is the promise of the greater psychology awaiting its hour …*
>
> (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 97)

This chapter addresses ways in which *yogic* (and related) principles and practices can be introduced more fully into psychological research, in order to allow that research—and psychology itself—to be more inclusive, integrated, and relevant to human psychospiritual concerns. Much of the chapter takes the form of an illustrative case study of how this approach already is being implemented in the curriculum of one graduate psychology programme—that of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, CA.

For students who initially encounter research courses in their graduate psychology training, *research* and *empirical* are thought to be synonymous with *quantitative* and *experimental*. In the research courses of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, however, they soon come to appreciate that there is more to quantitative research than experiments—that this form of research also includes less restrictive causal-comparative and correlational approaches. More important, they also quickly learn that research legitimately includes even less restrictive *qualitative* approaches, and that *empirical* can be understood in its original meaning of being based on *experience*. This growth of students' understanding of the nature of

research mimics the ongoing extension and expansion of research and disciplined inquiry approaches in psychology at large.

Although still enthralled by positivistic and cognitive behavioural assumptions and practices, researchers in psychology now are employing an increasing variety of qualitative methods and inquiry approaches. These include forms of research with names such as cooperative inquiry, grounded theory, hermeneutics, heuristic research, multiple case studies, narrative research, participatory action research, and phenomenological research (see Braud & Anderson, 1998). Virtually all of these acknowledge the crucial importance of the researcher as the chief instrument of knowing and also emphasize human lived experiences as their primary subject matter.

Along with this felicitous extension and expansion of research approaches, there has been a corresponding growth in the recognition of alternative and complementary modes of knowing. Within psychology, some of these have been identified with different intelligences (multiple intelligences, somatic intelligence, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence), feminine ways of knowing, forms of knowing associated with different states of consciousness, intuition, tacit knowing, and different forms of learning and memory (see Braud, 2006a).

Contemporary psychologists now recognize an expanded range of what might be known. They study observable behaviours and actions of individuals, groups, societies, and cultures, but they also have developed technologies that allow them to explore covert processes such as physiological reactions and the concomitants of imagery, thinking, memories, and volition. They now investigate intangibles such as 'qualia', meanings, imaginings, symbolic and even unconscious processes.

These developments have been useful and fruitful, yet they remain unnecessarily limited. Despite these extensions and expansions, much still has been left out, and much remains undone. There is a need for even more inclusive forms of research and disciplined inquiry—forms that provide greater opportunities for synergistic interactions of knowledge gain, clinical and other practical applications, and the personal and psychospiritual growth, development, and even possible transformation of the researcher. There is a need for effective bridging of science and the various spiritual and wisdom traditions. Growth in areas of morality, scholarship, depth and subtlety of thought, care, and wisdom seems not to have kept pace with the growth of knowledge. Although we have experienced great advances in technology, today we appear to know more and more about less and less, and know less and less about truly important matters—matters of ultimate concern.

Indian psychology and *yogic* epistemology and ontology can contribute much to enrich research and help satisfy the needs mentioned above. The aim of this chapter is to describe ways in which *yogic* principles, and processes closely related to these, already have been usefully introduced into research praxis, and to suggest additional ways in which aspects of *yoga* might be integrated into research in the future and how this might enliven and transform the research enterprise. Before treating these contributions, some additional background will be useful.

A pluralistic epistemology

Above, there was an allusion to the increasing recognition, in Western psychology, of alternative modes of knowing. Different forms of knowing have received equal or greater attention outside of Western psychology—in philosophy and in the great spiritual and wisdom traditions, particularly in the Indian tradition.

Virtually all traditions have distinguished forms of knowing that are *intellectual* and *of the head* from those that are *experiential* and *of the heart*. In intellectual knowing, the knower is removed from what is to be known; the knowing is mediated, and it tends to be academic, abstract, and cognitive. Experiential knowing is fully and deeply lived, immediate, and embodied; it tends to be particular and concrete.

In the West, these major complementary forms of knowing have been variously described and named. In early Greek philosophy, they appear as *dianoia* (the discursive, conceptualizing, and logical faculty) and *nous* (the largest manifestation of mind, the deepest core of one's being that could know the inner essences or principles of things by means of direct apprehension or perception). *Dianoia* was only part of *nous* (see Palmer, Sherrard & Ware, 1995, pp. 427–437). *Nous* possessed qualities 'more spiritual than mind, more intellectual than spirit' (Underhill, 1960, p. 121). In the well-known opening passage of *Ennead* 4.8.1, Plotinus (1988) mentioned descending from Intellect (*nous*) to discursive reasoning (*dianoia*).

In the Middle Ages, the different forms of knowing often were described as different *eyes*—the *eye of the flesh* (sensory knowing), the *eye of reason* (mental knowing), and the *eye of contemplation* (spiritual knowing). These ways of knowing were elaborated, for example, by Boethius, by Hugh of St. Victor and other Victorine mystics (Richard of St. Victor, Thomas of St. Victor), by Bonaventure, and by Thomas Aquinas (see Boethius, 524/1980; Bonaventure, 1259/1953; McGinn, 1996, 1998; Thomas Aquinas, 1267-1273/1971).

Roger Bacon (1268/1928) distinguished two modes of acquiring knowledge: by *reasoning* [*argument*] and by *experience*. For Bacon, nothing could be sufficiently known without experience; when one has had an actual experience, one's mind was made certain and rested in the full light of truth.

William James, in the *Principles of Psychology* (1890/1950, pp. 221–222), distinguished two kinds of knowledge: *knowledge-about* (which might also be called representative knowledge, and of which thoughts, conceptions, and judgments are the vehicles) and *knowledge of [or by] acquaintance* (of which feelings, emotions, and sensations are the vehicles). The former can be imparted to others; the latter, because it is a direct and immediate experience, cannot be so imparted—through conventional means—but must be partaken of, directly, by another, in order to be appreciated.

Similar distinctions have been made in the various streams of the Sufism tradition:

> Knowledge is empty unless it is connected internally with what is known.

> Reason always means knowledge at a distance, across the mediation of language and concepts; but wisdom presupposes something like the intimacy of becoming what one knows. "What a difference there is," al-Ghazali writes in his autobiography, "between *knowing* the definition of health and satiety, together with their causes and presuppositions, and *being* healthy and satisfied!" (p. 55). Only the mystics can raise knowledge to the level of *gnosis* (*ma'rifa*), in which one experiences what one knows with all the intimacy of being… (Bruns, 1992, p. 127).

Within the Naqshbandi tradition of Sufism, in using experiences with fruit as metaphors for knowing the Divine, the forms of knowing are elaborated further:

> Three 'kinds of knowledge'...have to be separated, and the difference has to be felt:
> - The description of something—as in the words used to convey the idea of a fruit;
> - The feeling of something, as when one can see, feel, and smell a fruit;
> - The perceptive connection with something, as when one takes and tastes, eats and absorbs a fruit.
>
> These three departments of cognition are described in more technical language as:
>
> - Certain knowledge *(Ilm-al-Yaqin)*, which comes from the intellect, which tells us that there is a fruit;
> - Eye of certainty *(Ayn-al-Yaqin)*, which is from the 'inner eye', and operates like the senses but in relation to deeper things; the 'assessment of a fruit';
> - Perfect truth *(Haqq-al-Yaqin)*, which is the experience of 'union with Truth' (Schneck, 1980, pp. 32–33).

Additional forms of knowing that have been treated in the West include Dilthey's concepts of *Erlebnis* ('intentional experience'), *Verstehen* ('empathetic understanding'), and *Nachleben* ('re-experiencing' or 'reliving'; see Hargiss, 2001); *tacit knowing* and *personal knowledge* (Polanyi, 1964); a form of knowing called *mimesis*, in which a member of the audience of a performance comes to know through imitation, personal identification, and sympathetic resonance with a performer (Havelock, 1963; Simon, 1978); and *ritual knowing*, in which participation in a ritual can allow one to know in a more direct personal manner and embody what is being addressed in the ritual and can facilitate transformative change (Deslauriers, 1992), especially in liminal contexts (McMahon, 1998). To these may be added knowing through affect, compassion, and love; through being and becoming what is to be known; through direct knowing and intuition; through sympathetic resonance and empathy; through *unknowing*; and through *pure consciousness* (see Braud & Anderson, 1998; Forman, 1997, 1999). The varieties of paranormal knowing—processes identified as telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition—also can be added to this listing (see, for example, Braud, 2006a; Rammohan, 2002).

Within the *yogic* and Indian psychology traditions, the means of knowing have been described with great subtlety and precision. Three aspects of knowing, in particular, can be highlighted here: the refinement of knowing within the training system of the Patañjali *Yoga-Sūtras*, Sri Aurobindo's views of the four types of knowledge, and Sri Aurobindo's views of the process of intuition.

The eight limbs described in the Patañjali *Yoga-Sūtras* (see, for example, Woods, 1927) provide ways of readying and purifying the body, emotions, and mind for a form of knowing through being or identifying with what is to be known, achieved through *saṁyama*, the intensive and conjoint practice of the last three limbs of *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (contemplation or meditation), and *samādhi* (absorption). The several limbs of Patañjali *Rājayoga—yama*, *niyama*, *āsana, prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi*—provide methods for systematically reducing the possible environmental, social, bodily, sensory, emotional, and cognitive sources of 'noise' or distraction that might serve as impediments to, or distortions of, accurate and sensitive knowing.

Sri Aurobindo (1972, p. 524) identified and described four forms of knowing that occur in our ordinary waking consciousness:

> Our surface cognition, our limited and restricted mental way of looking at our self, at our inner movements and at the world outside us and its objects and happenings, is so constituted that it derives in different degrees from a fourfold order of knowledge… A knowledge by identity, a knowledge by intimate direct contact, a knowledge by separative direct contact, a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact are the four cognitive methods of Nature.

These four types of knowledge have been clearly elaborated by Matthijs Cornelissen (see this volume, pp. 334–337).

Sri Aurobindo (1972, pp. 946–947, 949) described a special form of knowing that he called *intuition*. Intuition, of course, has meant many different things to different people. For Sri Aurobindo, it has a special meaning, as follows:

> Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity. It is when the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting; or when the consciousness, even without any such meeting, looks into itself and feels directly and intimately the truth or the truths that are there or so contacts the hidden forces behind appearances, then also there is the outbreak of an intuitive light; or, again, when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contactual union with it, then the spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth-perception is lit in its depths. This close perception is more than sight, more than conception: it is the result of a penetrating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence. A concealed or slumbering identity, not yet recovering itself, still remembers or conveys

> by the intuition its own contents and the intimacy of its self-feeling and self-vision of things, its light of truth, its overwhelming and automatic certitude....
>
> Intuition has a fourfold power. A power of revelatory truth-seeing, a power of inspiration or truth-hearing, a power of truth-touch or immediate seizing of significance, which is akin to the ordinary nature of its intervention in our mental intelligence, a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth, — these are the fourfold potencies of Intuition. Intuition can therefore perform all the action of reason, — including the function of logical intelligence, which is to work out the right relation of things and the right relation of idea with idea, — but by its own superior process and with steps that do not fail or falter.

Don Salmon (2001, pp. 31–33) has provided a useful treatment of Sri Aurobindo's views on intuition, elaborating the concept, identifying it with Sri Aurobindo's conception of the faculty of supramental consciousness (Sri Aurobindo's *vijñāna*), distinguishing it from other processes, indicating how it underlies all other forms of knowing, and suggesting ways in which intuition might be developed. The latter is treated later in this chapter.

> The simplest description of intuition is the direct knowledge of Reality, a knowledge in which the knower is not separate from either the process of knowing or the object which is known... It is the consciousness of the subject (the percipient for which the brain constructs the image) meeting up with the consciousness in the object (the apparently separate perceived object — a chair, tree, rock, etc.) that is united by means of an intuition which is rooted in the same Self common to both... In using intuition one has to become involved in what one knows, but without getting lost in it... Intuition underlies virtually all forms of knowing, whether instinctive, aesthetic, imaginative or intellectual.

An additional form of knowing, described in certain Indian traditions, is that of *śaktipatha*, which involves the direct transmission of experiential knowledge or 'spiritual energy' from one person to another (usually from *guru* to *celā*), which may influence a dramatic change in being in the recipient of such a transmission.

The various Western and Indian views presented above suggest a pluralistic epistemology involving a *spectrum of ways of knowing*. The range and varieties of what might be known in these different ways also suggests a pluralistic ontology—a *spectrum of knowables*, with each aspect of that spectrum having its distinctive reality.

A pluralistic ontology

Near the beginning of this chapter, the variety of 'objects of knowing' that are being explored in contemporary Western psychology—the 'big three' being affects, behaviours, and cognitions—was mentioned. This could be expanded to include a wide range of physical, physiological, somatic, emotional, mental, imaginal,

societal, and cultural processes and contents, which can be addressed by a combination of first-person, second-person, and third-person approaches that are being applied to the study of consciousness (e.g., Varela & Shear, 2002) and by means of the four major perspectives described by Ken Wilber (2000) in his popular 'all quadrants, all levels' (AQAL) model (which addresses objects of knowing and corresponding ways of knowing that can focus on interior or exterior aspects of individuals or collectives). This spectrum of what might be known can be filled out and extended by adding sensations, perceptions, feelings, memories, meanings, symbolic appreciations, and other 'qualia'.

However, these additions are not sufficiently bold. To be true to human experience, we should add more *subtle qualities* of things, others, and ourselves—characteristics that might be perceived not in more conventional ways, but through less familiar forms of inner knowing, direct knowing, intuition, and gnosis. Some of these would include subtle fields and subtle energies around or within objects, plants, animals, and persons; perceived 'presences' of various sorts; experiential encounters with other realms or beings, with the Self, with the Divine, with the One.

The perceptions and knowings of the types of subtle qualities just mentioned can be treated in conventional science, psychology, and phenomenology simply as *experiences*, without confronting the issue of the ontological status of the objects or elicitors of the experiences. The question of the reality of these objects/elicitors receives much greater attention in parapsychology and psychical research, transpersonal psychology, mystical studies, and in the great wisdom and spiritual traditions. These objects or elicitors are just as 'real' as are the more familiar objects of our experience, but that they partake of different forms of reality that usually are not available to our conventional senses in ordinary conditions of consciousness but can become available to faculties that are understood as unconscious or superconscious, in other states of consciousness. In the terminology of the three eyes of knowing, these objects and elicitors may not be 'seen' by the eye of flesh, but may be seen by the eyes of the mind, of the heart, of the spirit. An even bolder suggestion would be that each object of knowing possesses its own form of consciousness with which the consciousness of the knower can connect and thus know directly, in an 'internal' manner. Such a suggestion is consistent with Sri Aurobindo's (1970, pp. 2, 234–237) view that consciousness and inherent intuition are present throughout existence—both above and below the human range, even in 'inanimate' matter, where it may appear nonexistent—but variable in its status, condition, and operation.

Mentioning the three eyes raises the issue of matching the appropriate eye to the nature of what is to be seen. Ken Wilber (1990) has warned of the risk of *category error*, when one eye attempts 'to usurp the roles of the other two' (p. 7). There would appear to be three positions with respect to this issue. First, one can contend that each eye (each mode of knowing) is adapted and specialized (prepared, adequate) for one set of 'data' (objects, elicitors); each eye can see only in its own realm, and it makes no sense to expect one eye to look into the realm

of another eye. Second, one can agree that each eye is optimized for a particular realm, but some seepage or crosstalk (generalization, transfer) can occur; one eye may, under special conditions, see imperfect glimpses, or glimpses of only certain aspects, of what usually is available only to another eye. Third, perhaps the eyes have different fields of view; some eyes may see only very narrowly (their own realms), whereas others might have much broader and deeper vision and might see all or nearly all of what might be seen (in all or nearly all realms).

In agreement with this first position, one might imagine a spectrum of modes of knowing perfectly aligned with a spectrum of knowables, with very narrow correspondences and limitations of what each mode is able to know. This is perhaps the most commonly accepted view of science and of disciplined inquiry. According to the second position, category errors could be defeated in that some features of some knowables could be available to all modes of knowing. Examples of this possibility are the empirical findings within the field of parapsychology (psi research) that the thoughts and intentions of one person may be associated with traces that can influence other persons or even physical measuring devices; other examples would be observations of certain parapsychological resemblances or analogs of mystical and revelatory experiences, or observations of brain activity patterns associated with forms of meditation, contemplation, and prayer. Here, it might be more accurate to speak of *varieties*, rather than *spectra*, of knowings and knowables, with various degrees of overlaps among them.

A more detailed example, presented elsewhere (Braud, 1994, p. 30), may further clarify the nature of this second position:

> Imagine a three-dimensional cube constructed of twelve sticks, and imagine a light source projecting the shadow of this cube frame onto a two-dimensional sheet of paper. Viewed only as a two-dimensional projection, the cube has lost its third dimension, and its reality has been "stepped down." Imagine, further, that the light source begins to move and that the cube begins to move and to rotate. The cube's two-dimensional projection will change dramatically. If one is limited to a study of the two-dimensional surface, what one can say about the cube itself will be limited and necessarily incomplete. The constantly changing, and sometimes apparently contradictory, patterns of the projections may lead to confusion and seeming paradoxes about the source of these shadows. To attempt to draw final conclusions about the nature of the cube from any one shadow-pattern would be unwise. To build up a conception of the cube gradually, and by considering all of the projections and their possible interrelationships, would provide a truer picture of the cube's nature. Although each projection is incomplete, it is nonetheless true to a particular aspect of the cube. Invariant relationships of aspects of the cube in three-space will be reflected in similarly invariant relationships within the two-space shadow projections. *The projections never tell us anything false about the cube.* Their lessons are merely incomplete and relative.

In this cube-and-shadows example, the 'eye' of the two-dimensional paper can capture at least certain aspects of the cube that would be available to an 'eye' capable of seeing the cube, clearly and directly, in three-dimensional space.

According to the third position, a certain form of knowing might be able to access the essential qualities of all knowables. This would seem to be the contention of Sri Aurobindo, when he argues that knowledge by identity (*Vedic* knowledge) or by intuition can know all that is essential about the Many because of the underlying oneness shared by the knower and the multiple knowns. Relevant here are the *Upaniṣadic* avowal, 'When That is known, all is known' (cited in Cornelissen, 2001, p. 8), as well as Sri Aurobindo's (1981) statement about knowing 'the entire universe in one of its frontal appearances' (p. 30).

Another issue that arises in the context of the plurality of knowing modes and the manifold objects of knowing is the question of whether there might be hierarchies of efficacy, power, or quality for the various ways of knowing and of value, worth, or importance for the many objects of knowing. Such hierarchies (or holarchies) are implied by the spectrum conceptualization. Inequalities among forms of knowing and among what might be known are implied by Kurt Gödel's and Gregory Chaitin's theorems and theories that certain things are not knowable within a given system and that no system can explain any other system that is more complex than itself (Gödel, 1962; Nagel & Newman, 1958; Rucker, 1987), as well as by Huston Smith's (1992, pp. 119, 151, 200) contention that a form of knowing might not be capable of understanding anything that is superior to itself in qualities of intelligence, awareness, compassion, value, or worth. These views suggest that there are certain things that we might never truly know. However, this position might be countered by the understanding of *tat tvam asi* (that thou art)—that in an essential and profound manner we *are* all things and therefore are able to know all things, through a knowledge by identity.

Given these contextualizations of the ranges and limits of knowings and knowables, we are ready to move on to a consideration of practical ways in which *yogic* principles and techniques have been or might be introduced into research praxis.

Initial integrations of *yogic* principles and practices into research

This section provides descriptions of ways in which *yogic* and related principles and practices already are being implemented into the forms of research conducted at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology.

The Institute's general atmosphere. Because of the Institute's emphasis on transpersonal psychology, its general ambiance already is one that is favourable to the aims, values, and principles of *yoga* and Indian Psychology. Most of the faculty and students already have backgrounds, interests, and experiences relevant to spirituality and to psychospiritual growth and transformation. In addition, the Institute's pedagogy emphasizes experiential and whole-person teaching and learning, and this fits well with the general emphases of *yoga*. A subset of the faculty and students are engaged more specifically and actively in the spiritual and wisdom traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Advaita Vedānta, and various forms of *yoga*,

per se, and these persons already are integrating *yogic* and *yogic*-like principles and practices into their lives and work, including their research endeavours. All of this provides a very hospitable context for the implementation of the ways of Indian Psychology into the research conducted at the Institute. However, the presence of this special conducive atmosphere, to the extent that it is not available elsewhere, suggests caution in generalizing what may or may not be possible or successful in other research contexts.

Inclusions in Integral Inquiry. The research approach of Integral Inquiry (Braud, 1994, 1998a, 1998b) includes several principles and practices that are directly or indirectly related to *yoga* and to Indian psychology more generally. The naming of this approach had nothing to do with the Integral Yoga and Integral Yoga Psychology of Sri Aurobindo (1948/2000) and The Mother, the integral structure of consciousness described by Jean Gebser (1949/1986), or the Integral Psychology of Ken Wilber (2000). However, the approach has considerable overlaps with these views. With Integral Yoga, the approach shares the aim of being as inclusive and integrative as possible, in both its epistemology and its ontology. The approach acknowledges the legitimacy of a great variety of ways of knowing (endorsing William James' [1912/1976] *radical empiricism*) and levels of what is to be known (levels of reality). The following are additional areas of overlap and correspondence between Integral Inquiry and the emphases of Integral Yoga and Indian psychology at large:

- Emphasis on experience as disciplined inquiry's primary subject matter
- Research may be transformative for the researcher, the research participants, and the audience of a research report
- Inclusion of bodily, emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual facets in research and as validity indicators
- Recognition of the limitations of purely intellectual or exclusively sensory approaches to research
- The importance of the processes of intention, attention, and intuition in research
- The possibility of direct knowing and knowing through being or becoming what is to be known
- Stressing the importance of the adequacy or preparedness of the researcher
- Clearing and optimizing researcher-as-instrument through reduction of psychological impedance and sources of distraction, bias, and 'noise'
- Patañjali's *saṁyama* as a way of knowing
- Acknowledging the research-relevant contributions of many disciplines (natural sciences, social and human sciences, humanities, arts, spiritual and wisdom traditions)

Preparation of the researcher. It is well recognized that a researcher's knowledge, skills, and characteristics are of the utmost importance in research. The researcher's

own qualities inform all aspects of a research project. These qualities help determine the subjects and topics to be investigated; how projects are framed; the nature of research hypotheses or questions; how research participants are treated; how data are collected, analyzed, and reported; and where and how one looks for inspiration and support throughout the research process. Researcher characteristics are especially important in *qualitative* research, in which the researcher is the major 'instrument' in the research project, and in which all materials are collected, processed, and interpreted through the filters that are the researcher's personal qualities. This aspect of research has been recognized in the qualitative approach of grounded theory in its treatment of *theoretical sensitivity*, in which the investigator's prior familiarity with what is studied and her or his observational and interpretative experiences and skills help inform the theories that are being developed along with data interactions throughout a research project (Glaser, 1978). Investigator qualities also have been treated by Skolimowski (1994) in terms of the various *sensitivities* of the knower, and by Schumacher (1978) as the knower's *adaequatio* (adequateness) with respect to that which is to be known. The essence of these and other related treatments is that a researcher can know only that for which his or her being has been adequately prepared. Some of this preparation may be influenced by preexisting dispositions (perhaps genetically or karmically-informed), and other aspects may be developed through appropriate *training*. The important role that *yoga* might play in such training has been expressed well by Cornelissen (2001, p. 11):

> A considerable purification of one's inner instrument, or *antahkarana* is essential. The … yogic traditions … all have … methods to improve the range, … "resolution" and … reliability of inner perception. These … can be grouped into those that aim at greater concentration, at freedom from the sense-mind leading to an ability to penetrate the deeper and higher layers of consciousness, and at freedom from partial identifications, that is from the body, … vital drives and emotions, … thoughts and … ego-sense. These techniques are … considered to lead to a free consciousness, capable of watching the movements of *Prakriti*, nature, as a completely independent witness, making it possible to observe inner events … with a greater precision, … perfect "objectivity" and … reliability. The inner disciplines of Yoga can thus play exactly the same role for a science of the inner realities as modern technology is playing for the material sciences.

Although, in this comment, Cornelissen was addressing the use of *yogic* preparation in developing more accurate introspection, in refining the observation of inner experience, the same techniques can be applied in preparing and purifying the researcher's *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal organ of knowing) for a deeper, more accurate, and more satisfying study of any object of inquiry. This purification process can allow the researcher to reduce various distractions and biases that might distort what is to be known. This is similar to, but much more profound than, the role played by the so-called *bracketing* process in phenomenological research (see Polkinghorne, 1989), in which one attempts to set aside preconceptions and

pre-understandings of what is studied. The *yogic* preparation and purification is more profound in that it addresses a much wider and deeper range of possible distractors or impediments to knowing that can exist not only at the cognitive level, but at sensory, bodily, emotional, and more subtle levels, as well. Besides reducing possibly interfering 'noise' or distractions, these same preparatory and purifying techniques—in the form, for example, of practicing the eight limbs of Patañjali's *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*—can help the researcher adjust his or her very being in ways that can allow more direct forms of knowing the object of research (that is, forms of knowing through being or becoming what is to be known).

At the Institute, Olga Louchakova (2005) has been developing a training programme for enhancing the researcher's preparedness, 'fitness' (*adaequatio*), 'clear mind' or 'clear internal instrument' (*antaḥkaraṇa śuddhi*), and capacity for 'knowledge by presence', based on principles and practices from the traditions of Vedānta, Śākta-Vedānta, Sufism, and Hesychasm (the early mystical tradition within Christianity).

This researcher training was intended to develop the following qualities, as understood in the Indian and related traditions, and as summarized in Louchakova's report (2005, paraphrased from p. 98):

- Discrimination (*viveka*)—the capacity of discernment of real and unreal, that is, between cognitions of constant and changing elements of the mind, and eventually between pure awareness and phenomenal awareness
- Dispassion (*vairāgya*)—due to cessation of resolved or satisfied desires, as a precondition for knowledge of the Self, to be followed by control of the mind and senses, cessation of social activity, control of passions and endurance, settling down to reflect on the nature of consciousness, and faith
- Passionate desire for liberation (*mumukṣutvam*)
- Qualities of humility, modesty, nonviolence, endurance, simplicity, purity, persistence, and self-control (from the Śākta-Vedānta tradition)
- Removal of the 'veils' of the mind, in its natural condition, through persistence in study, contemplation, spiritual discipline and exercise, in the quest to develop a 'mind of the heart', that is, direct intuition, rather than knowledge via logical processes (from the Sufism tradition)
- Purifying the heart through watchfulness, curtailing passions, resisting temptation to the external senses, and developing detachment, mindfulness, and inwardly deployed attention (from the Hesychasm tradition)

Developing the qualities noted above can help correct mental and character structures and processes that ordinarily interfere with the clarity of direct perception and direct knowing.

The actual training exercises involved practice of mindfulness in identifying, recognizing, and naming forms of internal awareness (sensing, feeling, imagining,

and thinking); reflecting on the type of research paradigm (for example, positivism/postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism) that best fitted the researcher's project and aims; and developing knowledge through presence (developing 'mind of the heart') through a technique of focused introspection on the sense of self, localizing awareness in the inner space of the (right side of the) chest.

Louchakova (2005, pp. 106–107) described outcomes of the training as follows:

> Students described the layers of introspective experiences as emerging in the following succession: (a) sense of personal self of the right side of the chest; (b) sensory experiences; (c) … rising emotions, subtler sensations of energy, and breath; (d) … 'talking' mind; (e) … images; (f) stillness, nothing, unknowing, like in a deep sleep … (g) … sheer intellect, meanings, and vast space and subtle mental states, archetypes, and essential relations, … (h) absorption of awareness in pure subjective consciousness …. Students … learn to differentiate between the various manifestations of consciousness … This direct knowledge of the structures of the psyche provides a very tangible help in learning the skills of phenomenological analysis, by correlating the maxims of phenomenology and one's own inner experience. Phenomenology stops being perceived as an abstract philosophical system and becomes a practical guide to self-understanding and interior transformation.

The exercises mentioned above focused upon the preparation of the researcher for phenomenological research; however, their use may be generalized to other forms of qualitative research and, indeed, to research in general. Like these exercises, the practice of the eight limbs of Patañjali *yoga* and of the integral research skills described below also can foster a greater preparedness and adequacy of the researcher.

Integral research skills. 'Integral Research Skills' is the name of the first in a sequence of research courses offered at the Institute. This course is placed first because it provides a very accessible introduction to research. In this course, students learn how personal and spiritual practices can be translated into skills that can be used in the service of research. The skills can play three roles in research—they can help increase the sensitivities and preparedness of the researcher, they can provide vehicles for multiple modalities of knowing, and they can allow access to a greater range of what might be known in any research project. The skills are relevant to Indian Psychology and to *yoga* in that they can help researchers experience more expanded aspects of themselves and of their potentials, they can help establish preconditions for direct knowing, and some of them closely resemble actual *yogic* techniques. The skills are called integral research skills because when used together they can help provide a complete and integrated (integral) appreciation of the topic being studied.

Table 14.1 indicates the skills covered in this course, along with brief descriptions of how each skill is practiced and used.

The skills	Their description, practice, and use
Working with intention	Awareness of, and deliberate framing of, intentions for all phases of a research project
Quieting and slowing	Sets stage for use of other skills, relaxes and quiets, reduces distractions and 'noise' at many levels, reduces structures and constraints, allows change, allows fuller observations and appreciation of more subtle aspects of what is studied
Playing	Fosters curiosity, creativity, and insight; encourages beginner's mind; provides novelty, new combinations; encourages excitement, enthusiasm, exploration
Working with attention	Practice in deploying, focusing, and shifting attention; deautomatizing attention; attending to different forms and channels of information; changing focal plane or magnification of attention; developing witnessing consciousness
Auditory skills	Practice in devoting more complete attention to external and internal sounds and to sound memories and sound imagination
Visual skills, imagery, visualization, imagination	Practice in devoting more complete attention to outer and inner sights and images; use of memory images, visualization, spontaneous and guided imagery; active imagination; empowered imagination
Kinesthetic skills	Practice in knowing, remembering, and expressing knowing and being through gross and subtle movements
Proprioceptive skills	Practice in identifying and attending to subtle visceral and muscular sensations; working with felt senses, feelings, affective knowing
Direct knowing, intuition, empathic identification	Identifying with the object of knowing; knowing through presence, empathy, sympathy, compassion, love, being, becoming, participation; sympathetic resonance; empathic identification; parapsychological processes
Accessing unconscious processes and materials	Reducing egoic control; tacit knowing; liminal and transitional conditions; incubation; attention to vehicles that carry previously unconscious information; identifying unconscious tendencies
Mindfulness	Being present in time, capacity to identify and disidentify appropriately, self-awareness, skills of self-observation
Discernment	Mature judgment, integrity, capacity to know the sources and natures of events that arise in consciousness
Compassion	Empathy, service, personal presence, caring and love for others, understanding the feelings and experiences of others
Appreciation of differences	Openness to new information, assumptions, and other ways of being, knowing, and doing; openness to change; flexibility, inclusiveness, and tolerance; honouring of differences and others

Table 14.1: Integral research skills and how they are practised and used.

Students identify and practice these skills through experiential exercises presented by the course instructor. They then indicate how they might use the skills, in themselves—as researchers—in the three major phases of any quantitative or qualitative research project (planning and collecting data, working with data, presenting data). They also are encouraged to introduce the skills more fully into their professional work and into their lives, in the service of their personal growth and development.

In addition to working with these skills, themselves, as researchers, students are encouraged to consider ways in which they might request the research participants in their future studies to use similar skills—for purposes of remembering, reliving, and communicating past or present experiences to the researcher, in ways that might be more complete, detailed, and accurate than what might be possible without the use of such techniques. Also, students are asked to consider how they might ask the audiences/readers of their research reports to use similar skills, in order to more fully receive the findings that are being presented to them.

Some of the integral research skills mentioned above are closely related to principles and practices of Indian Psychology and, especially, to certain of the eight limbs of Patañjali *yoga*. None of the skills are closely related to the first two limbs *yama* (restraints) and *niyama* (observances). Quieting and slowing are somewhat related to the third and fourth limbs of *āsana* (postures) and *prāṇāyāma* (vital energy/breath control). The auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and proprioceptive skills, to the extent that these involve shifts away from the outer world and toward inner experience, are somewhat aligned with the fifth limb of *pratyāhāra* (sensory withdrawal). The skills of attention, direct knowing, intuition, empathic identification — and, to some extent, slowing and quieting as well — share certain features with the sixth, seventh, and eighth limbs of *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (absorption). Direct knowing itself, as a form of knowing through being or becoming or by identity, is related most closely to the intensive and conjoint practice of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*, treated as *saṁyama* in the *Yoga-Sūtras* of Patañjali. The skill of playing, of course, resonates with the Hindu concept of *līlā*, cosmic play.

Yogic principles and practices in psi research. The important roles that Indian thought and *yogic* principles and practices have played in psi research (the scientific and scholarly study of paranormal processes of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, psychokinesis, and related phenomena) have been treated extensively elsewhere (for example, Braud, 2006b; Rammohan, 2002; Rao, 2002). *Yogic* applications in psi research have emphasized both theory (for example, the relevance of the *guṇas* and the *siddhis*) and technique (particularly the relevance of some of the limbs of Patañjali *Aṣṭāṅgayoga* for the somatic and psychological preparation of research participants in psi experiments). Here is a summary, in tabular form, of how researchers have used practices related to those of several of the limbs of *Aṣṭāṅgayoga* in conducting experiments and exploring relationships in various areas of psi research. Table 14.2 is organized simply to indicate concentrations and patterns of research—four *clusters* of research areas that correspond to four

clusters of *yogic* techniques—rather than precise one-to-one correspondences; it is recognized that the various *yogic* practices are interrelated, as are the processes at work in the various psi research areas. The reader is referred to Braud (2006b) for detailed treatments of this material. It may be of interest to note that virtually all of these applications have been in psi research projects that have been carried out in a *quantitative* research fashion.

Psi research areas	***Yogic* practices**
—	*Yama* (restraints) *Niyama* (observances)
Relaxation research Hypnosis research Physiological research	*Āsana* (postures) *Prāṇāyāma* (vital energy/breath control)
Dream telepathy research Ganzfeld research	*Pratyāhāra* (sensory withdrawal)
Concentration/visualization in receptive psi Concentration/visualization in active psi Meditation research Absorption research	*Dhāranā* (concentration) *Dhyāna* (meditation) *Samādhi* (absorption)

Table 14.2: Areas of psi research and corresponding 'limbs' of *yogic* practice.

The use of techniques similar to the *yogic* practices in experimental psi research not only indicates the relevance of the Indian practices to research, but to the extent that their practice is associated with accurate psi functioning in the experiments, the experiment outcomes provide empirical support for the existence of the *siddhi*-like processes that are believed, in Indian thought, to be associated with the extensive practice of the *yogic* techniques in more natural settings. These empirical confirmations of certain *yogic* claims increase the possibility that future research will support the validity of other *yogic* epistemological and ontological claims as well.

Further possibilities

The foregoing section outlined the beginnings of attempts to introduce *yogic* principles and practices into quantitative and (especially) qualitative research. There are several ways in which such introductions and integrations might be increased in the future:

- Practices associated with each of the limbs of *Aṣṭāṅgayoga* could be introduced more fully and more formally into research praxis. Presently,

practices associated with the first two limbs — *yama* (restraints) and *niyama* (observances) — are conspicuously absent. The relevance of these two limbs not only to research dealing with psychospiritual topics but to research at large would seem to be an especially fruitful arena for future exploration. The practice of these two limbs should be especially useful for enhancing the preparedness (adequacy) of the researcher.

- In order to introduce forms of inner knowing (direct knowing, knowledge by identity, intuition) into research, ways of training and development of these forms can be investigated more fully. An obvious first approach to developing direct knowing is the practice of the eight limbs of *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*.
- Several practices that might facilitate the development of intuition have been identified. Salmon (2001) has described a number of these: making ourselves more receptive to intuitional knowing; working with symbolism, metaphors, and dreams; attending more fully to conscience or 'ethical intuition'; preparing ourselves for intuitive knowing by learning more effective ways of quieting the mind, emotions, and body; and by practicing detachment and honesty. These could be pursued personally, as well as in formal research contexts.
- Salmon (2001, pp. 33–34) suggests that intuition might be developed by engaging in *analytic meditation*:

> Analytic meditation … involves an alternation between purely discursive reasoning and stable, one-pointed concentration on intuitive realizations as they arise. One takes an idea or theme, such as the impermanence of all things that can be perceived or conceived. One then engages in careful intellectual reasoning, and calls up images and memories from personal experience, bringing the central theme to mind with great vividness, clarity and aliveness. When this process is pursued with sufficient concentration, there will come moments in which a sudden inspiration flashes into the mind. … When such a moment arises, active thought should be temporarily suspended, and all one's concentration focused with great energy on the intuition. … If this practice is followed with diligence, a change may gradually occur in which the discursive reasoning takes on a more intuitive and global quality, while the intuitions that emerge gain in acuteness of perception and discernment.

- Mentioning 'intuitive and global quality' calls to mind a fascinating and potentially powerful research tool—the *projective differential*, developed by Peter Raynolds (1997). The projective differential (PD) is a standardized, holistic and intuitive procedure that can be used to qualitatively and quantitatively assess a person's salient integration of cognitive and affective reactions to a particular topic that is being assessed. The PD uses choice responses to very briefly presented pairs of carefully designed,

abstract images in order to register holistic, intuitive, affective (nonverbal, 'unconscious') reactions, preferences, and attitudes. It has features similar to those of the more familiar *semantic differential* (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). It resembles a tachistoscopic Rorschach presentation. The rapid and projective nature of the procedure serves to minimize deliberate, conscious distortions, and, therefore, the PD results may have greater validity than do many deliberate, verbal assessments. The PD procedures also include built-in indicators of the discrepancy or incongruence between its own novel (imagistic, intuitive, affective) measures and more traditional (verbal, consciously and deliberately considered) measures. The PD is recommended as a very specific way in which to study a form of intuitive knowing and its accompaniments and outcomes in formal research settings.

- Future researchers may profitably explore methods described by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother (Das, 1997), in writings on education, for developing and refining the major mental faculties. In his section of that book, Sri Aurobindo described these functions as the four layers of the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇa*): basic mental consciousness and memory (*citta*); sense-mind (*manas*); intelligence (*buddhi*); supermind (*vijñāna*). In the context of these functions, he addressed simultaneous and successive teaching methods and suggested ways of removing obstacles and obstructions to knowing and ways of training the accuracy and sensitivity of the senses, the mental faculties generally, and the logical faculty specifically. He also addressed the imagination as a most important and indispensable instrument, and its proper exercise as being as important as the training of the faculties that observe and compare outward things. Many of the methods and procedures described in a previous section of this chapter, on Integral Research Skills, are very closely aligned with Sri Aurobindo's suggestions for useful educational training.
- The approach of Insight Dialogue, developed by Greg Kramer and Terri O'Fallon could be explored as a way not only of accessing inner knowing but also of communicating that knowing with someone else. The approach was described by Salmon (2001, p. 24) as follows:

> Greg Kramer … in collaboration with Terri O'Fallon, has developed a meditative practice he calls "Insight Dialogue." In its simplest terms, the practice involves meditating while engaged in interpersonal interaction; in other words, speaking while meditating … Kramer developed a research methodology which applies this practice to scientific research. The methodology has each individual, on their own, attempt first to enter into a meditative state of deep tranquillity and equanimity. From this state, they each engage in a process of intellectual and intuitive exploration regarding an inner object of study such as a particular mind state, feeling, pattern of sensations, sequence of ideas, memory, worldview, etc. After a period of individual investigation, they would come together.

> Engaging in an insight dialogue session, they would communicate—while remaining in a state of tranquillity and equanimity, always mindful of and receptive to flashes of intuitive knowing—the results of their respective investigations, inquiring more deeply of each other, checking for biases, unquestioned assumptions, etc. Perhaps other such approaches will evolve in coming years.

This dialogic inquiry approach is described in detail in an unusual joint dissertation by Kramer and O'Fallon (1998).

- The dialogic inquiry approach could be extended to develop ways of sharing one's inner knowing with others, in a manner that might help establish the validity and reliability of such knowledge. This would be a step in the direction of what Charles Tart (1972) has advocated as 'state specific science'.
- Forms of paranormal knowing (telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition) might be introduced more fully into the research enterprise, not only as objects of study but as techniques to be used in the actual conduct of research. The Integral Research Skills course mentioned earlier already includes some of these techniques in the context of the direct knowing, intuition, and empathic identification skills.
- In connection with paranormal knowing, the use of exercises related to *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*, mentioned in Table 14.2 above, could be extended from quantitative studies, in which they typically have been used, to qualitative investigations of psi.
- At the Institute, Rosemarie Anderson (2004) has been developing a research approach, Intuitive Inquiry, that substantially honours intuition as a research tool. She has identified five modes of intuition: unconscious processes, psychic or parapsychological experiences, sensory modes of intuition, empathetic identification, and through our wounds, along with a blended form of these modes. Although only some of these modes closely resemble intuition as it is considered in the present chapter, a greater emphasis on the modes described by Anderson, along with greater practice of ways of fostering those respective modes, may be helpful in establishing some of the preconditions necessary for the emergence of the more direct, knowing-by-identity, form of intuition discussed here.
- Typically, one attempts to *express* one's inner knowing through linear prose. Alternative means could be tried—for example, poetry, artwork, movement, and various nonlinear, nonverbal means—and these might be able to communicate sympathetic understandings to others that are not possible via linear prose. Anderson (2001) has taken steps in this direction through developing what she calls *embodied writing*, in which one attempts to 'presence' an inner experience while writing, in order to invite the same experience in a reader, through sympathetic resonance. The practices mentioned here—which one usually thinks of only in

connection with the fine arts and the humanities—could be introduced more fully into research and disciplined inquiry in order to communicate one's findings more effectively to the audience of one's work. In India, there is a long tradition of using poetry to express inner knowing, as in the *Vedas*, in the *Upaniṣads*, and in various forms of mystical poetry.

Additional considerations

The foregoing sections addressed some of the ways in which specific aspects of *yogic* practices and principles and some aspects of Indian psychology already have been applied, or might be applied, in the context of research praxis. Along with such applications there arise a number of issues that merit additional consideration. One of these is that care is needed when certain practices developed in one culture are applied in other cultures. The success of such applications may vary widely, depending on the nature of the prior and new contexts and whether the practices are applied in unchanged or in modified forms. This issue may be addressed by paying careful attention to the contexts of origination and application and to how the practices are framed and presented to the new users, along with careful monitoring of the accompaniments and outcomes of the applications.

Another issue relates to how and how much of the principles and practices of one tradition might be wisely applied in another tradition. Salmon (2001) has highlighted the dangers of picking and choosing only selected aspects from a complex and well-integrated Indian tradition, with the resultant risks of dilutions and distortions. He urged taking Indian psychology seriously—honouring its own understandings, rather than filtering those understandings through other interpretative lenses. As examples of such filtering, he indicated how certain aspects of Indian thought and teachings might be variously interpreted through phenomenological, historical, psychoanalytic, neuroscientific, and postmodernist lenses. In applying *yogic* principles and practices to research, it is important to be alert to the possible losses or distortions that might result through gross or subtle—perhaps even 'unconscious'—framing of the borrowed or translated techniques, influenced by the predispositions of the borrowers. One may address these risks by attempting to deepen one's understanding of the source and nature of what is borrowed as much as possible and by attending as fully as possible to the application itself and to its side effects and outcomes.

In the Indian and *yogic* traditions, in which the principles and practices treated in this chapter have their home, the overarching emphasis is on the psychospiritual growth, development, and transformation of the practitioner. In applying the various techniques to research, in other contexts, it is important that attention be paid not only to how those techniques might facilitate the knowledge gain of the discipline, but also to how well the borrowed or bridging techniques might foster the wisdom, spiritual growth, and transformative change of the researcher, the research participants, the intended receivers of the research findings, and society and culture at large.

In this vein, this chapter ends with a short quotation from the conclusion of a previous paper (Braud, 2006b, p. 22):

> Prior uses of yoga-related processes in psi research might be likened to stealing jewels from temples. A deeper appreciation of these processes might foster a realization of the purposes for which the temples were constructed in the first place.

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15

Knowing in the Indian tradition

Girishwar Misra

> The intellect acquires critical acumen by familiarity with different traditions. How much does one really understand by merely following one's own reasoning only? —Bhartṛhari (*Vākyapadīya* 2.484)

The quest for knowledge in social sciences has largely emulated and adopted the natural scientific mode of knowing under the assumption that the crux of scientific understanding lies in the set procedures irrespective of the domain of study. A close scrutiny of the repertoire of the empirical methods and techniques makes it amply clear that such an approach was based on the premises of unity of science, observer-independent reality, static and fixed nature of reality and possibility of valid and value-free method of knowledge generation. The promise was to offer unequivocal evidence and certainty. With this kind of conviction effort was made to develop theories and principles of various phenomena. In fact, the emphasis on manifested empirical world has yielded increasingly greater amount of data regarding variables of various kinds supposed to unravel principles stating invariances. In this kind of knowledge-generation, an object is observed by the scientist with the explicit goal of control and prediction. In this context, empiricism informed the scientific effort towards understanding any phenomenon and constituted a prototypical approach for modern social sciences including psychology. Until recently it unquestioningly enjoyed the status of the most respectable and authoritative means of knowledge. The tradition of modern psychological study of learning/knowing was framed in the context of sensory experiences. The cognitive and computer-based information theoretic models of learning too are ultimately rooted in the empiricist tradition. Now it is clear that both top-down and bottom- up processes are required for explaining the vast range of cognitive processes. Contrary to empiricism, the roots of rationalism lie in reason. It assumes that mind must be integral to the experiencing self. It is not something that follows or processes experience. It is quite clear that the sensory experiences and mental operations cannot be meaningfully separated and appreciated.

However, the success story of the physical sciences has impressed the social scientists, particularly psychologists, in such a way that research modeled after

physical sciences standardized the pursuit of knowledge. It was treated as secular, real, trustworthy, universal and rational. However, adoption of the same in the case of human beings has proved not only problematic but also the primacy of the method started dictating the terms and conditions of the whole inquiry. It was a matter of methodological discretion whether a given phenomenon would be admitted for the purposes of study. This assumption was based on the strong belief that the scientific procedure is equipped with in-built mechanisms of generating unambiguous and flawless data, and could provide dependable and generalizable knowledge. The most damaging consequence was that the subject matter was appropriated and a number of tactics were employed to preserve and sustain the scientific spirit at any cost.

The developments in the sociology of science and the philosophy of science, however, tend to suggest that scientific activity is a human social activity. Also, the limitations of positivist-empiricist mode of knowing are becoming apparent and new meta theories of understanding are emerging from diverse areas such as critical theory, hermeneutics, phenomenology and literary criticism, which are opening new ways of looking at the problem of knowledge. The interpretive turn is challenging the foundationist views and favors multiplicity of truth and understanding. Empiricism as only epistemology is being questioned and alternative epistemologies are being sought. Rationalism is one alternative. However, post modernists object to empiricism and rationalism and go for social constructionism and modes of hermeneutic engagement as better options. Both of them situate knowing in the social domain. The social constructionist scholarship has illustrated that understandings of various phenomena do vary across societies, cultures and eras. The conventional understandings in Western psychological scholarship are different from what we find in non-Western cultures. This has been demonstrated in the domains of self, emotions, values, motivation and personality. In the Western world the process of knowing as well as values attached to it have been largely linked with the idea of progress. To a large extent the practice of the discipline of psychology has subscribed to this view and has become ethnocentric. This has resulted in depicting cultural differences as deficits. In recent analyses the applicability of the imported knowledge systems has been found quite constrained and efforts are directed toward exploring alternative perspectives on knowing available in the disparate traditions.

Against this backdrop, this chapter explores the process of knowing in the Indian tradition. In particular it provides a sample of thoughts the content and characteristics of which are worthy of investigation by cognitive, cultural and cross-cultural psychologists.

Indian perspectives on knowledge

A close perusal of the Indian philosophical texts reveals that in this tradition, the existence of human beings is usually conceptualized as but a constituent part of a broader field encompassing the whole universe. Unlike in the Western tradition,

man is not at the centre of the universe. The manifest diversity of the experienced or phenomenal world is grasped and often conceived in terms of a non-individualistic and a predominantly cosmic world-view. While Western thinking is characterized by dynamics 'which continually expresses itself in setting problems, and approaches the single object as static entity; India utilizes the fundamental notions of statics in stating the leading questions, but at the same moment conceives the actual object dynamically as passing from its origin to decay, without becoming clearly recognized and distinguished as a static existent, separated from other cosmic phenomena' (Heimann, 1937, p. 19). Thus Indian thought treats reality as a unified whole as opposed to a collection of discrete objects or events. Within a relational world view everything present in the universe is treated as a part of an interconnected whole. This implies that all the constituents share the essential properties of the whole (*yat piṇḍe tad brahmāṇḍe*). It implies interdependence and connectivity. Ramanujan (1990) has termed it context sensitivity.

Another related feature of the Indian way of thinking is its emphasis on abstract concepts and universals. Thus, as Nakamura (1964, p. 47) states 'most of the Indian thinkers are apt to emphasize universal concepts and to subordinate the concrete individual and the particular perception to the universal. The individual soul, for instance, was given the metaphysical status of a permanent substance co-eternal with God.' This implies that the essence of the individual or the particular is not greater than the universal which becomes a basis for realizing the particular.

While the above characterization holds true for many systems of Indian thought it would be incorrect to argue for complete homogeneity in the Indian perspectives. The Indian tradition is very rich and consists of many schools of thought, which have grown and addressed the issues of reality and methods of knowing in diverse ways. Even a brief introduction to these systems and their nuances is beyond the scope of this presentation. There are twelve major schools of Indian philosophy. They constitute two main groups, that is, the *Vedic*—those who accept the authority of the *Vedas* are called *āstika* (orthodox) and the Non-*Vedic*—those who deny the authority of the *Vedas* are called *nāstika* (heterodox). The six orthodox schools can be arranged in three sets that are akin to each other:

1. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika,
2. Sāṁkhya and Yoga, and
3. Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta.

The six heterodox schools come under the following three heads:

1. Materialism known as Cārvāka or Lokāyata,
2. Jainism,
3. Buddhism, which has four sub-divisions:
   (a) Vaibhāṣika (direct realism),
   (b) Sautāntrika (indirect realism),
   (c) Yogācāra (idealism), and
   (d) Madhyamika (nihilism)

(See for details Akhilanand, 1948; Bijalwan, 1977; Coomaraswamy, 1943; Dasgupta, 1922; Dutta, 1960; Goward & Kunjunni Raja, 1990; Hiriyanna, 1932; Larson & Bhattacharya, 1987; Matilal, 1990; Paranjpe, 1984, 1998; Potter, 1977; Radhakrishnan, 1952; Raju, 1985; Safaya, 1975).

The present attempt is limited to providing a selective overview of the major perspectives on knowledge available in the Indian tradition.

The nature of knowledge and knowing

The notion of knowledge has been approached by Indian thinkers in diverse ways. It has been conceptualized as 'relation', 'act', 'quality', and 'self-subsistence'. However, all these terms are interlinked and do not refer to exclusive categories. In the philosophical literature, *jñāna* (cognition), *upalabdhi* (attainment) and *buddhi* (intellect) are often used independently as well as interchangeably to refer to knowledge. The Sāṁkhya theory proposes that knowledge is a mode of *buddhi*, which is an evolute of *prakṛti* (matter). As an activity, knowing is characterized as a process of consciousness. We use a number of measures/means (*pramāṇa*) as instruments (*karaṇa*) to obtain valid cognition (*pramā*). A valid cognition is one which is 'free from doubt' (*saṃśaya*), indefiniteness (*anadhyavasāya*), and error (*bhrama*), and which, therefore, reveals things as they are (*yathārtha*), furnishes the basis of successful activities (*samvādi-pravṛttyanukūla*) and is not contradicted (*abādhita*) by any other experience (Dutta, 1967, p. 119).

The process of knowing involves four factors, that is, subject (*pramātā*), object (*prameya*), method (*pramāṇa*) and the resulting knowledge (*pramā*). True or valid knowledge is not possible in the absence of any one of these. However, the operative cause of knowledge is *pramāṇa*. It is also subject to various types of errors. However, the validity of knowledge may be determined by focusing on the functional aspects of reality. This empirical world is treated as a field of action (*karmamayam jagat*). Everything, therefore, is meant for some action and every action has an end. We can test when a given object serves the end for which it is meant (*arthakriyākārin*). It is believed that novelty is the major feature of knowledge.

According to Gautama, the founder of Nyāya School, the beginnings of any inquiry lie in doubt (*saṁśaya*) and the desire to know (*jijñāsā*). At this point the utility for human good is explicitly stated and a careful analysis of the pros and cons of the issue (*pakṣa pratipakṣa*) is done and an attempt is made to ascertain true knowledge. The terms are accurately defined (*lakṣaṇa*) and their indications are stated. The seeker of knowledge is advised to observe the following steps of rigorous critical inquiry:

- Use all valid sources of knowledge;
- Use (and avoid conflict with) established theories;
- Use examples acceptable to all;
- Use the five-step method of discovery and proof;
- Use the indirect hypothetical/postulation method to strengthen the argument;

- Avoid material fallacy (*hetvābhāsa*),
- Avoid quibbles (*cala*),
- Avoid false analogies (*jāti*), and
- Avoid self-satisfying steps which may cause defeat in debates.

The inquiry is rooted in multiple sources including direct experience, introspection, knowledge obtained from other valid sources, current linguistic usage and knowledge of previously established theories. The inquiry is disciplined by certain norms. It is stated that the suppositions should be parsimonious (*laghavaḥ*) and if perception is sufficient nothing unperceived should be supposed. Alternative suppositions have to be eliminated. Defects in the process of reasoning such as self-dependence (*ātmāśraya*), mutual dependence (*anyonyāśraya*), circular reasoning (*cakraka*) and infinite regress (*anavastha*) have to be checked and eliminated. The validity of knowledge is regarded natural by some (for example, Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta) who think that the conditions of validity lie within the very conditions that generate the knowledge. Thus knowledge is known from the knowledge itself (*svataḥ-pramāṇa*). Contrary to this other thinkers (e.g., Nyāya Vaiśeṣika) hold the position that knowledge is not self-manifest and needs external validity (*parataḥ pramāṇa*). Buddhists think that validity is nothing but practical efficiency. Knowledge of knowledge has also been explained in diverse ways. Some consider knowledge as self-manifest (*svataḥ-prakāśa*) (for example, Sāṁkhya, Vedānta, Prabhākara, Jain) while others consider it as based on introspection (Nyāya) or inference (Bhaṭṭa). True knowledge (*vidyā*) leads to the awareness of the unity incorporating all the manifestations. On the other hand, ignorance (*avidyā*) denotes an understanding which leads to the view that all things are separate and diverse.

Types of knowledge and systems of studies

The pursuits in the realm of knowledge were classified in two broad categories, that is spiritual knowledge (*parā vidyā*) and empirical knowledge (*aparā vidyā*). Spiritual knowledge is concerned with the experience of universal reality and empirical knowledge is bound to specific objects. It deals with the name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*) of ultimate reality in its diverse manifestations. The knowledge of supreme reality was supposed to lead to liberation (*mokṣa*). Empirical knowledge is of practical significance and deals with the ordinary world. It is pragmatic. In this context, it may be mentioned that the two types of knowledge are used to support the whole range of existential concerns and, therefore, are complementary. Both have a significant place in realizing the life goals (*puruṣārthas*). Liberation is accessible by multiple means and does not necessarily imply renunciation of the world. Rather, it involves liberation from the false ego boundaries which make a person self-centered.

It is interesting to note that the term *vidyā* was used for science as well as philosophy. *Vidyās* were classified in four major categories, that is, *ānvīkṣikī*, *trayī*, *vārttā*, and *daṇḍanīti*. They dealt with philosophy, *vedic* knowledge, and economic and political studies, respectively. *Ānvīkṣikī* is 'philosophizing' rather

than 'philosophy'. Thus the Buddhist, the Jain, the Cārvāka together with (the *veda*-believing) Sāṁkhya, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika are recognized as divisions of *ānvīkṣikī*. The development of these *vidyās* demonstrates a dialectic of two perspectives, the orthodox and the heterodox. As Pandey (1984, p. 220) says,

> The former stressed authority and tended to be conservative while the latter relied on reason and experience alone. In the course of their interaction the orthodox stream sought to reconcile tradition with reason and introduced modifications through commentarial interpretations and even interpolations.

The development of knowledge systems is conceptualized in the form of *śāstras*. As Pandey (1984) says,

> [A *śāstra* consisted] of a system of rules with its own techniques and concepts. It was required to define itself with respect to its subject matter, purpose, relevance, and the class of inquirer who was eligible for its study (*anubandha-catustaya*). The knowledge which the sastras embody is discursive, rational and practical. Being discursive it is different from intuitive spiritual wisdom which is timeless and unchanging. Its rational and practical aspects are complementary. Reason is not conceived here as an independent source of knowledge. It is integrally connected with experience and faith but differs from these in being self-critical and indirect.

The treatises on erotics (*kāmaśāstra*), wealth/economy (*arthaśāstra*) and ethics (*dharmaśāstra*) were very systematically developed and exemplify the idea of *śāstra*.

Attitude towards knowledge

Knowing involves relating to the different aspects of our Reality such as persons, events, objects and ideas. The Indian attitude towards knowing is grounded in a set of premises as stated below.

1. *Ignorance is the cause of suffering*. The pursuit of knowledge in general is oriented towards removal of suffering (*sā vidyāyā vimuktaye ṛte jñānān na muktiḥ/ vidyayāmṛtam aśnute*) experienced in one's life. It is not considered as a pure intellectual exercise.
2. *Knowledge of any kind is inseparable from the human goals and values*. Human life has been traditionally conceived as the pursuit of four related goals (*puruṣārthas*), that is, *dharma* (ethical merit), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (enjoyment) and *mokṣa* (salvation). The pursuit of these goals has to take place in the context of the four life stages or divisions of life, that is, student (*brahmacarya*), householder (*gṛhastha*), forest dweller (*vānaprastha*) and renouncer (*sannyāsa*). These stages are preparatory to the life goals. It may be noted that *mokṣa* (liberation) as a goal has been a later addition to the goal structure and is not a compulsion. Similarly, forest dwelling is also optional. One may decide to remain a householder and continue in the community life and instead of becoming a renouncer may try to pursue *dharma* as a *gṛhastha*.

3. *The philosophical discourse*, although it has intellectual and academic focus on the problems of human existence, *is intimately linked to the life of action in society*. A motive towards the search for an ideal life and a deeper sense of life is always present. The quest for being itself (ontological being), which encompasses both being and becoming is central to the process of knowing.
4. *Knowledge is characterized more in terms of modifications, structuring and reorganization of the knower*. It changes the knower or the person engaged in the pursuit of knowledge more than changing or controlling the object or the thing being known. In fact, knowledge was supposed to transform the whole person by introducing changes in mental, linguistic and behavioural functioning of the person.
5. The *relationship between dharma and knowledge in the Indian tradition is congenial*. As Paranjpe (1984) has rightly indicated, in the Indian context of *Adhyātma*, there is no conflict between science and religion, which has resulted in an avoidant attitude towards religion in the West. As a result, Indian science developed in close relationship with *dharma*.
6. The Indian view assumes that the universe is lawful and there is continuity within the entire animate kingdom. Similarly, man's relationship with nature is also construed in different ways. The Western view emphasizes a conflict between man and nature because man is placed over nature. In the Indian tradition, man and nature are interdependent and share coexistence. As V. N. Misra (1984) has remarked, man does not stand on the top of the universe nor is the rest of existence subservient to him. There is an inherent correspondence of macrocosm and microcosm. The man in Indian thought is operating on two planes, one operating along the dimension of time and space, while the other transcends time through its projection in its progeny and transcends space through its identity not only with the nature around, but with all the beings.

Mind: Its nature, states and functions

Most of the schools of Indian philosophy consider that mind (*manas*) cannot be equated with self (*ātman*) who is the knower. It is considered as a substance and an instrument of knowledge. The materiality of mind has been very strongly emphasized by the Sāṁkhya system. Some schools consider mind as an internal sense organ responsible for the experiences of pleasure, pain, and other internal states (Chennakesavan, 1980).

It is held that knowledge constitutes the nature or quality of self (*ātman*) acting through mind, reaching out to the objects and making them known to the self. An early reference to the functions of mind in *Aitareya Upaniṣad* includes the following: *samjñāna* (awareness), *ājñāna* (perception), *vijñāna* (discrimination), *prajñāna* (intelligence), *medhā* (wisdom), *dṛṣṭi* (insight), *dhṛti* (steadfastness), *mati* (thought), *manīṣā* (thoughtfulness), *smṛti* (memory), *saṃkalpa* (conception), *kratu*

(purpose), *asu* (life), *kāma* (desire for a thing), and *vaśa* (desire for possession). *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* also gives a list of mind's functions which incorporates some additional functions such as *citta* (intelligence and thought), *dhyāna* (concentrated reflection), and *smara* (remembrance). Finally, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* considers *kāma* (desire), *vicikitsā* (doubt), *śraddhā* (belief), *aśradhā* (disbelief), *dhṛti* and *adhṛti* (steadiness and unsteadiness), *hrī* (shame), *dhī* (meditation) and *bhī* (fear) as the mind's activity.

The Yoga system delineates five modes or states of mental activity consisting of *kṣipta* (wandering), *mūḍha* (forgetful), *vikṣipta* (distracted), *ekāgra* (one-pointed) and *niruddha* (restrained). In terms of discriminating power, mental activities are classified as *kliṣṭa* (hindered) and *akliṣṭa* (unhindered). The *akliṣṭa* has discrimination for the objects and consists of *vṛtti pramāṇa* (valid knowledge), *viparyaya* (illusion), *vikalpa* (predicate relation), *nidrā* (sleep), and *smṛti* (memory). Perception depends on mental modification or *citta vṛtti* and contact between the target object and *manas* through sense organs. Self (*puruṣa*) is considered as the real cognizer. The *citta vṛttis* are illuminated by *puruṣa's* reflection in *buddhi.* Knowledge is illumination of a thing not already presented and is caused by the operation of the self. Illusion (*viparyaya*) means knowing of the unreal possessing a form not of its *own.* It is incorrect cognition (*mithya jñāna*). Such knowledge is contradicted or sublated by a subsequent cognition. The realization of the true self is also blocked by misconceptions (*kleśa*) such as *avidyā* (ignorance), *asmitā* (egoism), *rāga* (attachment or passion), *dveṣa* (aversion) and *abhiniveśa* (clinging to life). *Vikalpa* (predicate relation) is considered by *Yoga sūtra* as a way of knowing. It involves imagination without any corresponding perceptible object. It is the result of verbal expressions of knowledge. Recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) is considered as a form of perception by the Nyāya school of Indian philosophy. It occurs because of many factors such as attention (*praṇidhāna*), association (*nibandha*), practice (*abhyāsa*), indicative (*liṅga*), distinguishing features (*lakṣaṇa*), likeness (*sādṛśya*), ownership or possession (*parigraha*), support (*sambandha*), sequence (*anantarya*), separation (*viyoga*), similar employment (*ekakārya*), enmity (*virodha*), superiority (*atiśaya*), acquisition (*prāpti*), cover (*avadhāna*), pleasure and pain (*sukha* and *duḥkha*), desire and aversion (*icchā* and *dveṣa*), fear (*bhaya*), need (*arthitva*), profession (*kriyā*), affection (*rāga*), and merit and demerit (*dharma* and *adharma*). These causes of recognition are not mutually exclusive. They refer to the characteristics of objects and events, their contexts and relationships. In this conceptualization recognition is considered as recollective cognition. Some thinkers emphasize on its perceptual aspects and directness of experience, while others emphasize its memory component.

Memory (*smṛti*) refers to the activation of residual impressions or traces of the past experiences (*saṁskāras*). Memory is a function of the contact of these *saṁskāras* with mind (*manas*). It has been distinguished from recollection on the basis of presence/absence of objects. Some scholars have considered that being dependent on past experience (*anubhava*) memory is only a mediate knowledge. Others argue that memory is an indicator of the continuity of life and experiences. Memory is importantly related to *ākāra* (configuration) while perception involves

rūpa (form). The *saṁskāras* gradually become stronger with their repeated manifestations in actions. This has implications for the practice of *Yoga*. For instance, bad and painful *saṁskāras* have to be substituted by good and pleasant *saṁskāras*. The stored up experiences have tendencies for actualization (*vāsanas*). The *saṁskāras* are often present at the unconscious level.

Thus, while knowledge is a quality of the self it is manifested by the mind through its contact with the objects. It should be noted that if the self has to attain knowledge, the mind has to be active and regulate the entire process. Mind is matter but has *sattva guṇa* (luminosity) and, therefore, has the capacity to reflect. The objects being largely *tāmasic* (quality of darkness and heaviness) are incapable of luminosity. In the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, there are nine kinds of matter (or rather elements), namely, earth, water, fire, air, space, time, direction, mind, and self.

Consciousness

The meaning of consciousness in the Indian tradition has gradually evolved. The initial realization of the principle of oneness of the universe gradually led to the view that consciousness is transcendental and entirely unlike any known object of the empirical world. The absolute consciousness is empirically non-characterisable. It is yet not unknown, and its nature is *'jñā'* or pure intelligence. Its nature is of the constant, unchanging and basic consciousness. This provides a background and support for the empirically experienced consciousness. In fact the coalition of the changing and unchanging consciousness forms the basis of experience within which the distinctions of subject and object are made. Once we attain perfect harmony between our vital, mental and psychical beings and *sādhanā* has purified our being, we get the intuition of the transcendental. In the western tradition the psychological complex (for example, sensation, thoughts, feelings) is held to be mental. Contrary to this, Indian thinkers have considered the mental world also as part of matter. The difference between the two is only of subtlety (*sūkṣmata*) and fineness retained in the process of modification.

Causality

The problem of causality has been analyzed in different ways in the various philosophical systems. In the *Vedic* thought, causation is looked at from the cosmic point of view and the question considered is about the 'making' or 'creating' of the whole cosmos. According to one view the creator is *Brahman* or *Ātman* (Self) who creates the entire world out of itself and remains present in it. Another theory holds that the world evolved out of a primordial chaos or non-being. As Heimann (1937) says, *Upaniṣadic* cosmology teaches that the world originated by *sṛṣṭi* or *sarga*— seminal emission from the supreme body.

However, the idea of universal causality was questioned by subsequent thinkers. For instance Dignag argued that 'events alone are perceived substances and relations are constructed in judgment (*vikalpa*). The world that is directly perceived is only a flux of instantaneous events, but the world that is constructed by rational knowledge is an ordered whole of substances and relations. The constructed world

is superimposed on the perceptual world as its relevant description in verbal conceptual terms and this "systematic" or "transcendental" illusion is the basis of all thought and action' (Pandey, 1984, p. 228). Thus in this tradition causality is related to the nature of the mind and justified on the ground of its indispensability.

Buddhists have argued that the joint use of observation and inference and non-observation under certain conditions should be employed to ascertain causal relationships. The logicians (*naiyayikas*) view 'cause' in terms of 'activity of making'. In this sense causation stands for the whole process comprising of 'some agency producing some entity by acting on something else as its material'. Thus we have three causes, that is, the agent as efficient cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*), the material (*samavāyi kāraṇa*) and the joining/contributing factors (*asamavāyi kāraṇa*). In this framework, a cause is different from the emerging effect. The causes are considered as regular antecedents for the effects. In contrast, the Sāṁkhya theorists advanced the view that the effect pre-exists in the creation in some latent fashion. In other words, causation is really a manifestation of continuous evolution.

Reality

Reality is dealt within a general sense by reference to the notion of *padārtha* or *tattva*, the ultimate category. Different systems of thought identify different numbers of such categories. The ultimate principles are often put forward as distinct intuitable essences. They are conceptualized in terms of distinctive features (*lakṣaṇas*). Let us briefly examine the conceptualization of reality in the historical perspective.

In the early *Ṛg Veda* we find *Varuṇa*, a deity of universal character who was thought of as pervading nature, and influencing everything including sun, stars, water, the human mind and animal life. *Varuṇa* is referred to as the representation of *ṛta*—the cosmic order, or inner balance of the cosmic manifestations. It is a remarkable fact that the majority of texts emphasize cosmic plurality and cosmic interchangeability, involving alternation of even divine forms. As Heimann (1964, p. 39) says, 'to the Indian mind ... beasts are just as worthy an expression of divine Nature as is man. In India, then, not singleness, but plurality and manifoldness of form and type have been emphasized during every period... From the very beginning... matter is on an equal footing with spirit or mind…there is equal valuation of matter and spirit.'

It is very important to note that matter and spirit—eternal primeval essences share similar status. Also, the cosmic and specific faculties are derived from matter including intellect. The spiritual principle is often viewed as 'inactive'. Heimann (1937) has referred to three metaphors to illustrate the status of Spirit in the Indian tradition:

- Spirit riding as a mere passenger in the chariot of the cosmic urge.
- Spirit as the owner of a bedstead without active participation in supplying the material. He is only the customer for whom the bed has been manufactured so that he may sleep in it.
- Spirit as the magnet attracting matter, thus causing it to move and influencing its direction while himself remaining static.

The principles of reincarnation and *karma* are universal. They, however, are not pre-existent to the cosmic happenings, but come into existence together with these. There is no pre-eminent ultimate, unique principle. It has often been argued that the doctrine of *Māyā* is illusory and *Nirvāṇa* indicates annihilation of existence. As Heimann (1937) observes that *māyā refers* to measurable empirical things. They are smaller than the unmanifest (*avyaktam*) and being constructions are subject to destruction. The empirical reality is definite. The objects of empirical world do not share the transcendental reality of the 'indefinite'. Thus Indian thought recognizes an eternity of 'transcendental statics', and the 'continuity of an empirical dynamics'. Similarly, *Nirvāṇa* does not mean nullity. It refers to 'not thing', that is the indefinite thing.

The Indian ontology postulates two major planes (*satta*) of reality—transcendental (*pāramārthika*) and empirical (*vyavahārika*). The transcendental reality is considered to be non-changing and universal. It can be experienced under certain conditions like *samādhi*. In addition a category of apparent reality (*pratibhāsika*) has also been proposed (for example, the silver seen in the glittering conch-shell). It exists only for the duration of the cognition itself. It is not the matter alone but matter and spirit combined which forms the basis for activity. Also, there is the fundamental notion of an after-life for every existing entity. This world (*saṁsāra*) is supposed to be a continuous stream of active lives. The same cannot be interpreted as 'cycle of rebirths' since the individual in its rebirth never returns to the same point, but always to a more developed stage of incarnation, in accord with the growth of its own inherent tendency.

Thus, objects do not have only static existence. Rather, they are subject to continuous changes both in themselves as well as in their relationship with other existing objects. Heimann (1937, pp. 61-62) designates it as transcendental materialism which 'postulates the transformation of one empirical form into another, and finally all these into a static shapelessness which is beyond all empirical experience...It has an outlook tending towards ultimate oneness—the real *universe*—that is towards the primal and final *sat*, static being, which can nevertheless be grasped only in its derived forms of transient "becoming" in the empirical *Bhavas*.' In this framework human beings are not considered to be endowed with some great power because they have the capacity to reason, as Descartes postulated. Instead, as Heimann (1937, p. 97) says, 'India's conclusion is: In spite of my reasoning I exist just as do all other accidental manifestations of the primeval unity.'

The means of knowledge

Apprehending reality (*tattvajñāna*) and becoming aware of it requires some measure (*pramāṇa*) or means. In the Western philosophy perception and inference are two sources of knowledge. The various schools of thought have proposed diverse sources of knowledge and have various orders of preference. The major means of knowledge include the following: *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference), *upamāna* (comparison), *śabda* (verbal testimony), *arthāpatti* (postulation) and *anupalabdhi*

(non-cognition) are accepted as auxiliary sources of knowledge. In addition, *pratibhā* (intuitive knowledge), *aitihya* (unbroken tradition) and *sambhava* (possible inclusion) have been considered by some schools as sources of knowledge.

Perception (*Pratyakṣa*)

Perceptual knowledge is viewed as direct knowledge of objects, dealing with both external as well as internal (bodily) objects and states. It is an achievement of coordination among sense organs, self (*ātman*) and mind (*antaḥkaraṇa/manas*). In this process knowledge occurs in the form of 'consciousness' or awareness when mind and self come into contact. Thus it may be considered as an objective action based on the contact between sense-organ and dynamically active sense object. The internal objects (for example, feelings, states, etc.) are known through mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*) coming directly into contact with self. We perceive attributes of things or substances and experience their identities. It is assumed that individual characteristics as well as generic attributes are both perceived. It is held that knowledge requires modification of mind corresponding to the object. In this sense knowledge becomes a manifestation of consciousness through an appropriate mental mode. For instance Vedānta considers four states or functions (*vṛtti*) of mind, that is, deliberation (*manas*), determination (*buddhi*), egoism (*ahaṁkāra*) and recollection (*citta*).

A distinction has been made between indeterminate (*nirvikalpaka*) and determinate (*savikalpaka*) perception. Indeterminate perception is perception of the mere being. In determinate perception the identity is also included. The sensory experience is considered to be definite and assuring because the objects are directly presented to the knowing self by the activity of the sense-organs and the mind. Thus united with the sense-organs, mind contacts the objects. Mind plays an active role in this process. Perceptual knowledge, therefore, is a broader concept than what is usually understood by sensory experience. It subsumes the whole range of common sensory perception, introspection, as well as intellectual and mystical intuition.

Inference (*Anumāna*)

Inference is treated as knowledge of the invariable concomitant relation between what is perceived and what is deduced. The *Sanskrit* term *anumāna* means 'knowing after' or knowledge derived from some other knowledge. It also refers to 'measure along' using other measures. Thus, it involves deductive inference which follows from the already existing knowledge. In this framework, the significance of inference depends on what is available from direct perception. The syllogistic reasoning which illustrates the inference as conceived in the Indian tradition consists of five steps as follows:

- Proposition to be proved (*pratijñā*): The hill has fire.
- Reason for this (*hetu* or *liṅga*): Because it has smoke.
- Universal proposition supported by an instance (*udāharaṇa* or *nidarśana*): Whatever has smoke has fire, such as a kitchen.

- Application of the universal proposition (*upanaya* or *anusandhāna*): Hill has smoke, such as is always accompanied by fire.
- Conclusion proved (*nigamana*)*:* Therefore hill has fire.

It is evident that this kind of reasoning combines deductive as well as inductive processes. It involves formal validity with material truth through inductive generalization and deductive particularization. The use of example supplies a basis for enumeration and empirical induction enabling verification for sensible prediction. It shows that the major premise is really based upon an actual instance. This whole process is termed as comprehension (*parāmarśa*) which establishes a link in the entire process of inference.

Thus inference relies on the understanding of invariable concomitance deduced from observation of agreement in presence, absence, and non-observation of the contrary. Some scholars have talked about three types of inference based on *a priori* (*pūrvavat*) (inferring effect from cause), *a posteriory* (*śeṣavat*) (inferring cause from effect), and analogical (*sāmānyatodṛṣṭa*) (inference from something perceived as similar). A distinction between inference for self (*svārthānumāna*) and inference for other (*parārthānumāna*) has also been made. The major difference between the two is that in the latter all the premises have to be stated while the same is not necessary in the case of the former.

On the whole, the Indian syllogism exemplifies a novel way to approach the problem of inference. As Heimann (1937, p. 87) has observed, it 'is not ... an affair of pure deduction, but a sequence of inductions, and it is characteristic of India's practical outlook and its practical conception of proof'. It presents a 'paradigm of the union of diverse epistemic principles'. Pandey (1984, p. 221) states that in this paradigm 'reason examines a principle given in tradition in terms of its logical ground, empirical evidence and analogy. If reasons were unguided by tradition it would lead to endlessly changing conclusions. Although it is admitted that doubt requires reasoning and reasoning proceeds till one reaches a contradiction, it was realized that merely hypothetical reasoning or *tarka* can only have a subordinate role within the broader sweep of syllogistic reasoning or *anumān*.' He further notes that, 'by its working within the framework of tradition this conception of reason tends to be scholastic and conservative but by its working within a context of practical inquiry and experience, it has a pragmatic or *vyavahārika* character'.

Comparison (*Upamāna*)

Comparison is a spontaneous cognitive process to be called by the observance of similarity or analogy. This may be viewed as a way of knowing A's similarity to B from the perception of B's similarity to A which has been perceived elsewhere. Thus, it involves an empirical association of two similar observations. For instance, the relationship between *Brahman* and *Ātman* is viewed as all pervading and unrelated like *ākāśa* (space, sky). This source of knowledge is based on sensory facts but inference transcends the senses and helps in exploring the unseen. It is mediate and general in nature and shows that when perception is not sufficient the immediate cognition is used. It is important to note that the role of memory

in this process is secondary. The cognition of similarity leads to recollection and not *vice versa*. The observed similarity leads to the past experience. It seems that mind is considered to possess some special process leading to the observance of similarity. Unlike western thinkers Indians do not consider comparison as a form of inference.

Postulation (*Arthāpatti*)

This source of knowledge involves supposition or presumption of some fact. When in our experience some unit of cognition is incomplete, we posit something to make it a structured whole. In such a situation we often engage in assuming some unknown fact in order to account for a known fact that is otherwise inexplicable. A famous example often referred to in the Indian treatises goes like this: Suppose we found 'a stout person A who does not eat in the day.' Now, 'stoutness' is not possible without eating. The person, therefore, 'must be eating' and if he is not eating in the day then he must be eating in the night. Thus, in order to explain 'stoutness' we posit the fact of 'eating in the night'. Postulation is distinguished from inference on the basis of the absence of a major premise. It is also different from induction. A distinction has been made between postulation to explain something seen and postulation of a meaning for making words intelligible.

Verbal testimony (*Śabda*)

Most of the facts in everyday life are made known to us by means of words. In addition, under certain circumstances words can even serve as a means of immediate knowledge. They often supplement perception and inference. Not only this, in the Indian tradition they are viewed as the only vehicle of supra sensuous knowledge. Words are assumed to precede intuitive perception. This kind of knowledge is based on the comprehension of the meanings of the pertinent words and their interrelations. The words of trustworthy people who have attained knowledge (*āpta*) are important sources of knowledge. *Veda* or *Śruti* (scriptural authority) has been consistently considered as the only source of knowing *Brahman*—the absolute reality. *Vedas* are viewed as divine revelation representing indisputable truth. They are known as *nigama*. *Āgama* is actually a divine text different from *nigama or Veda*. The various tantric texts are *āgama* or 'the word that has become', the *Brahman* itself in the word-form. This is to be contrasted with 'the word that has come', a report on what God has said. The meaning of words (*śabda bodha*) works as a source of knowledge. It involves constructive combination of ideas. In this process the cognition of words is the instrument, recollection of meaning is the operation, and verbal comprehension is the outcome. However, scriptural authority is not the ultimate source of knowledge of *Brahman*. It is, rather, *anubhava* (intuitive experience), which leads to realization of *Brahman*. *Śruti* only clears the ignorance.

The words signify objects, actions, and attributes which have universal (for example 'cow' to refer to all cows) and particular (for example, 'cow' to refer to one particular individual cow) aspects. Usually the implied meaning is secondary but it is sought when primary meaning does not work. The primary meaning is related

to saying (*abhidhāna*) and secondary meaning involves pointing or indicating (*lakṣaṇa*). Thus, metaphors employ secondary meaning and point to something and have a suggestive power (*lakṣyārtha*). It is generally accepted that words have meaning only when they exist in the sentence. A sentence has four important features; that is, word order (*ākāṅkṣa*)—each word expects something from other words, coordination of meaning of a word with another (*yogyatā*), continuity in time and space (*sannidhi*) and intention (*tātparya*). The denotative meaning can be of four types, namely derivative (*yaugika*), conventional (*rūḍha*), derivatively conventional (*yogarūḍha*), and derivative and conventional (*yaugika-rūḍha*).

In the determination of meaning the context under reference plays a crucial role. The context involves several types of relationships (for example, association, dissociation, mutual association, hostility, opposition, purpose, context, situation, indicator sign, proximity, capacity, propriety, place, time, gender and accent). According to Patañjali, a great exponent of grammar, the meaning is learned from the behaviour of people. The convention (*samaya*) is viewed as the primary determinant of the meaning because the speaker and hearer are both members of a linguistic community. According to Prabhākara, words have no meaning apart from the action they lead to and the meaning of a word is the action to which they lead.

The importance of language as an activity, as languaging (*śabdana vyāpāra*) was clearly recognized by the Sanskrit grammarians. Language makes the human transactions possible. It is held that linguistic expressions have evolved out of one principle—word essence (*śabda tattva*)—eternal verbum. It refers to the ever extending consciousness of the sentient. Word as *Brahman* and alphabets as *akṣara* (undestroyable) convey an important sense. Matilal (1990) finds a significant link: 'our perceived world is also an interpreted world'. The act of interpretation is nothing but languaging. Language is inseparably related to awareness. All cognitive awareness appears in the form of interpretations through language.

It is interesting to note that Indian grammar (*vyākaraṇa*) which dealt with the systematic study of language also developed as a philosophical system. Being aware of the significant contributions of language to human experience and consciousness, not only the phenomenal aspects of language were taken into account but also contemplation about its metaphysical foundations was done. It was realized that knowledge is grounded in language. In the Indian tradition, the normative aspect of language focused on the oral or spoken form of language because the written form of language was considered inadequate to comprehensively encompass all aspects of linguistic reality. Words were treated as constituents of consciousness in the act of speaking.

Bhartṛhari, one of the most important grammarians, postulated that there is no cognition without the operation of words; all cognition is shot through and through by the word. All knowledge is illumined through the word (*sarvaṃ śabdena bhāsate*). It is through the meaning conveyed by words that all knowledge is experienced. This is true because we understand and communicate our thoughts only through the expressed words. Here, the word is not identified with sound only. The understanding regarding objects (*sampratyaya*) is also included in it.

The relationship between word and meaning is eternal and impersonal. Bhartṛhari observes that language operates at two levels. At first an idea comes as an inner flash (*sphoṭa*). This is the first level which is termed as *paśyantī vāc*. This is reflected in the intuitive flash of idea, sentence, or poem as a whole. Its manifested or uttered form is *vaikharī vāc*. Between these two levels there is a middle level known as *madhyamā vāc* in which the intuitive holistic idea is separated in sequence. This scheme covers the entire-range of linguistic operations.

Non-cognition (*Anupalabdhi*)

This is a means to the knowledge of non-existence (*abhava*). The underlying assumption is that if a thing is known by a particular sense-organ, its opposite will also be known by the same sense-organ. It is argued that non-existence of a thing is apprehended by its non-perception. The remarkable fact is that here the emphasis is on 'non-apprehension of presence' rather than non-perception of non-existence. Thus both existence and non-existence are facts of cognition. We say that 'there is no pen on the table'. Here the sense contact is with the *locus* of non-existence and not with the non-existence. Thus, only appropriate non-apprehension can cause valid cognition of non-existence. Indian logicians have identified several types of non-existence, such as those caused by destruction, absolute non-cognition and mutual non-cognition.

Knowing pleasure and pain

Manas (mind) as an internal sense-organ has been considered responsible for emotional experiences. The different schools of thought have explained these experiences in different ways. According to the Nyāya system, pleasure and pain (*sukha* and *duḥkha*), desire and aversion (*icchā* and *dveṣa*), cognition (*jñāna*) and volition (*prayatna*) are the qualities of the self (*ātman*). But they are known to self only when *manas* comes into contact with the self as possessed of these qualities. Pain occurs when the pressure from a want becomes extreme. When the want is satisfied, the person feels pleasure. Obstruction is the characteristic of pain (*bādhanalakṣaṇam duḥkham*). On the other hand, agreeableness (*anukūla*) is pleasure.

According to Vaiśeṣika *sūtras*, pleasure and pain are different as they have diverse causes and effects. Pleasure leads to a feeling of pleasantness (*anugraha*), attraction (*abhiṣvaṅga*) and brightness of the eyes and face, etc. (*nayanādi prasāda*). In contrast, pain's effects include anger, ideas of harm doing and depression. Both, pleasure and pain can be with reference to past and future. In these cases, they are based on recollection and reflection, respectively. Also, they are immediate perceptions, unlike cognition (*jñāna*) which involves doubt and assurance (*saṁśaya* and *nirṇaya*). Pleasure and pain cause desire and aversion (*icchā* and *dveṣa*). Desire is the source of effort, remembrance, virtue and vice. Some major types of desires are: lust, hunger, affection, aspiration, compassion, disinclination, disposition (to impose or deceive others) and inclination (unexpressed desire). Aversion leads to anger (*krodha*), ill-will (*droha*), resentment (*manyu*), jealousy (*akṣamā*), and indignation (*amarṣa*). The knowledge of pleasurable things leads

one to put incessant effort to obtain it. All other emotional experiences emerge out of pleasure and pain.

Realization of supreme knowledge

The learning processes for higher order knowledge (*parā vidyā*) require a Guru. It involves *sādhanā* (spiritual praxis) in the supervision of a *ṛṣi* or *draṣṭā* (seer). As Pandey (1984, p. 1) argues,

> Ultimate authority in India is in practice held to belong not to ancient books, nor their learned expositions, but to those who are believed to have personal experience of spiritual truth. It is a living vision which transforms the inner life, faculties and powers of the person who attains it. The process of seeking and attaining spiritual vision and inner transformation has been variously called, the commonest expressions being sadhana, or *yoga*.

In its broadest sense *sādhanā* involves perfection in work for every person in his or her respective pursuit and performance of duties. *Sādhanā* also denotes 'making', and thus implicates transformation of self. It involves detached truth seeking (*jijñāsā*), sensitiveness (*ākṣiptakalpatā*), earnestness (*saṃvega*), maturity and wisdom (*viveka*), and realization of the constraints and limitations emanating from egoism and acquisitiveness.

In general, three ways (*mārga*) *of* spiritual realization have been practiced. They consist of knowledge, action and devotion (*jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti*). The yogic system of *Patañjali* prescribes the practice of yoga consisting of eight limbs: restraints (*yama*), observances (*niyama*), postures (*āsana*), breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*), withdrawal of senses from its objects (*pratyāhāra*), concentration (*dhāraṇā*), contemplation (*dhyāna*), and *samādhi* (a trance like state). The *samādhi* state also has several hierarchically arranged levels or stages as listed below:

- *Savitarka*: In this stage words and their denotative and connotative meanings remain mixed together.
- *Nirvitarka*: This stage involves consciousness devoid of meanings and association originating from social conventions.
- *Savicāra*: This is characterized by a focus on space, time, and causal context of the object of cognition.
- *Nirvicāra*: This is a state uncharacterized by past, present, or future characteristics of object.
- *Sānanda*: This is focused on means of cognition.
- *Sāsmitā*: This is focused on the sense of self.
- *Asamprajñāta*: This state is the highest state devoid of all objects of cognition. The *yogī* attains final liberation, which is complete aloofness or isolation of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*. The experiencing subject is completely withdrawn into himself so that he is no longer conscious of anything. This condition emerges when all varieties of the processes of consciousness are completely restrained. It is usually achieved for short periods of time. Its practitioner experiences a superior form of direct perception, an

essence-envisioning perspective on objects, a truth-bearing insight, and an experience of bliss (Paranjpe, 1984). Also, its effects/ consequences do not impel a person to seek various objects of desire. This trans-cognitive state is a qualitatively different type of experience.

Vedānta also suggests that *nirvikalpaka samādhi* leads to the attainment of a superior state of being. This requires (a) correct discrimination between the everlasting and the impermanent, (b) maintaining mind (*sama*), withholding the senses from the objects of their pleasure (*dama*), preventing the mind from modifying itself (*uparati*), enduring hardships and pain (*titikṣā*), (c) adopting a conviction about faith in scripture and teacher (*śraddhā*) and resting mind (*samādhāna*), and (d) intense desire for liberation from the bonds created by egoism and ignorance. In addition, three broad strategies have been suggested, that is, learning/listening (*śravana*), intellectual training (*manana*) and ethical training (*nididhyāsana*).

Devotion (*bhakti*) is the second mode of spiritual realization. Devotion requires recognition of a personal God, who is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, and who confers his grace on the devotee when he surrenders himself unreservedly to God. The *Bhagavad Gītā* states that meditation of God and offerings with devotion and dedication make people free from the fruits which constitute the bondage of action. God is even-minded to everybody. However, those who worship him with devotion, they abide in God and God also in them. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Krishna says to Arjuna, 'On Me fix your mind, become My devotee, My worshipper; render homage unto Me. Thus having attached yourself to Me, with Me as your goal, you shall come to Me.' Giving up all action to God, full devotion, lodging all the understanding in God, removal of egoism (I-ness and my-ness), friendship and pity for all beings, tranquil, equality to pleasure and pain, patient, and forgiving have been enumerated as important characteristics of a *bhakta* (devotee).

Yoga of action (*karma*) is the third way to approach the supreme being and the transcendental reality. It is said that doing the assigned work without attachment leads to the highest goals. Work is also necessary for the solidarity of the society (*loka saṃgraha*). Thus in order to fulfill one's social obligations, one has inevitably to perform the assigned work. Thus one should engage in work and remain uninvolved in its consequences. The *Bhagavad Gītā* says that actions of all sorts are actually performed by the dispositions of matter (*Prakṛti*). However, due to egoism, a person thinks that 'I am the doer'. A person who knows that self, matter and action are different does not become attached to the results of actions. On the other hand, those who are attached to the dispositions and actions are attached to the outcomes. Actions do not cling to the person if there is no yearning for their fruit. Such an action is non-action. A person steadfast in yoga engages in action and abandons attachment. He becomes even-minded in success and failure. These approaches have been developed in detail by the different schools of thought and its sub-systems have emerged. However, the existence of a reality which transcends the phenomenal world and has no beginning or end has been accepted by almost all the orthodox systems of Indian thought. This reality is treated in popular Hinduism as God.

Concluding comments

The preceding account of knowing in the Indian context reveals a very rich and complex metatheoretical framework which has the potential to offer insights into the intricate processes of human understanding. The diversity in Indian thought is remarkable; it shows considerable similarity with the Western mode of intellectual inquiry up to a point. It is more rigorous and inclusive than western empirical approach as currently practiced in psychological science. Also, it goes beyond the Western approach in many ways. Belief in multiple but interdependent worlds, use of discursive practices, significance of language, perception, reason and *sādhanā* to obtain empirical truth on the one hand and a realization of transcendental reality on the other, are very important for a holistic understanding.

In terms of knowing, a comprehensive methodology has to respect the first person perspective also. Psychology as an inner discipline seeks to locate and find oneself in its true and unconditioned form. The empirical manifestations of the inner do not constitute the essence. The observations at the surface level are but expressions. The experiencing person has exclusive accessibility to and ownership of a state of awareness. Knowing, which incorporates both—understanding and realization of truth in one's being, is the goal. In this formulation the identity of subject and object opens up a new possibility of experience beyond the confines of the observation of surface manifestations. Realizing truth or experiencing reality in an unmediated mode through participation or conscious experience makes truth a part of being. The processes of *śravana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* relate to learning, understanding and realization, respectively. They emphasize sense mediated learning, reasoning and meditative knowing. Movement across these three levels involves third, second and first orders of knowledge in which externally observable, interpersonal or inter-subjectively shared and personally experienced self-transformation take place. It may have intrinsic authenticity. In this case validity is reflexive. It involves direct experience and a state of consciousness. It differs from the third person accounts prevailing in psychology which are framed within the context where subject-object duality is maintained and where interpersonal consensual validation is achieved. Ego remains at the centre. Contrary to this the Indian pursuit of knowledge moves in the direction of ego annihilation as it is an illusion. The egoless experiencing person is a mere witness—a *sākṣī*. Reducing the first person experience to third person observation is problematic. The existing approach in psychology is limited in its scope as it hardly touches consciousness as such—a reality in its own right. The Indian perspective takes a qualitative and spiritual position and warrants inner development that may enable direct experience. It calls for a consciousness based paradigm with the scope of direct and experiential knowledge. Such a move is a matter of contemporary relevance and practical utility. It generates new, different and a more comprehensive theoretical perspective, and concepts in which emancipatory values are central and pursuit for knowledge is more engaging.

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16

What is knowledge? A reflection based on the work of Sri Aurobindo

R. M. Matthijs Cornelissen

Introduction

The scientific and technological developments of the twentieth century have expanded our understanding of the workings of the nervous system beyond anything previous generations would have thought possible, but at the same time the concentration on the biological correlates of mental processes seems to have led us away from a deeper understanding of the amazing miracle that is human knowledge as a subjective phenomenon. While an enormous collective effort has gone into the refinement of physical and mathematical instruments with which we can measure the outer physical reality, there is no comparable systematic collective effort to improve our own inner instruments of knowledge. This is true even for research on meditation. The vast majority of such researches focus exclusively on the physiological states and processes that occur in the physical bodies of those who meditate; the remainder is almost entirely limited to those psychological variables that are conveniently measured objectively (Murphy & Donovan, 1997). As such they are about physiological and psychological side-effects of meditation, ignoring the aims and objectives of meditation in the culture of origin.[1] Even in research which ostensibly deals with the subjective side of life, the type of experience addressed tends to be limited to what naïve subjects can report about themselves, and in much of modern psychology it is not experience itself but statistically processed reports about experience that are taken as the actual data. As these reports are almost always based on unsophisticated self-observations by representative members of a larger population, all such studies can provide is thus a kind of social demography of surface mental self-perceptions. Though this has its uses, it is not sufficient for the development of deeper insight in human nature. What is strikingly missing in contemporary psychology is a systematic effort to hone and perfect our inner perception, our sensitivity to what is going on deep within ourselves. Any science that wants to make cumulative progress must look below surface appearances. We have done this with astounding results in the objective domain, but as a civilization, we have neglected the inner side of the equation.

Cataloguing and correlating phenomena that are either visible right on the surface (behaviour) or directly below it (through surveys based on naïve introspection) is not enough to develop a really meaningful and effective psychology.

Limitations of the explicit representational mode of knowing

The demand for objectivity has gone hand in hand with a tendency to think of explicit representational knowledge of the outer world as the only type of knowledge that can be cultivated systematically, reliably, and profitably. This tendency seems to have been reinforced by the ease with which such representational knowledge can be rendered symbolically and, more recently, stored, manipulated and redistributed digitally. This is so much part of our everyday experience that many people are under the impression that computers can actually think. Though the extent to which the working of the mind differs from the way computers work is well-known, the workings of the mind are commonly described in the language of computer science, even amongst cognitive scientists. The basic principle behind all this is not new. Freud thought of the human mind as a steam engine ready to explode, and when clocks were cutting-edge technology, humans were commonly depicted as fancy clockworks driven by a *homunculus*, a tiny man lodged somewhere deep inside the machine. Mechanical clocks and homunculi have fallen from grace, but we still model our own nature on our latest technology.[2] There is no doubt that the use of such metaphors has its positive side. Our understanding of clockworks has helped us to understand the mechanical forces active in our musculoskeletal system, and computer science is telling us valuable things about the way the brain processes nervous stimuli. But we should not forget that, in the end, they are no more than metaphors. At best, they can help to model certain aspects of a limited group of mental processes, but they do not tell the whole story. In fact, they light up only a tiny corner of the wonder that is human knowledge.

Diverse ways of knowing

For many of us, the most important and memorable experiences in life are those that connect us to deep, inner realities. They need not necessarily be of a spiritual or religious type. Such experiences occur even in the midst of a completely ordinary life—there is something extremely beautiful and deeply intriguing in simple things like our ability to hear a song in the distance, to see a tree swaying in the wind, to feel the warmth of the first sun rays on our skin in the morning, to look into the eyes of a child. These are cognitive events, but not of the ordinary representative type. How do we study these subtler moments of knowledge? How do we explore the utter miracle that is our subjective experience of ourselves and the world? These may seem questions suitable only for poets and dreamers, best left for Sundays, and unfit for practical men, but they may actually be crucial to our survival—psychology will fail the coming generations if it does not help us to develop a deeper insight into the more subtle aspects of human nature and the love and oneness that sustain us. Way back, in 1915, Sri Aurobindo wrote about this: ‘The safety of Europe has to be sought in the recognition of the spiritual aim

of human existence, otherwise she will be crushed by the weight of her own unillumined knowledge and soulless organisation'. In his next sentence he stressed the need for balance. There he said: 'The safety of Asia lies in the recognition of the material mould and mental conditions in which that aim has to be worked out, otherwise she will sink deeper into the slough of despond of a mental and physical incompetence to deal with the facts of life and the shocks of a rapidly changing movement'. Now, in the beginning of the twenty-first century, Asia is clearly waking up, but the danger of insufficient respect for the spirit is still real, and this time that danger looms not only in Europe.

It is in this area of subtle, subjective enquiry that the Indian tradition has perhaps made its greatest contribution to our collective understanding, and the rest of this chapter will be mainly about the type of inner knowledge that the Indian civilization has cultivated over thousands of years—why it must be there, how it can be found, and how it can be made more accurate and reliable. For my interpretation of the Indian tradition I base myself on the work of Sri Aurobindo (Arvind A. Ghose, 1872–1950) who made a comprehensive synthesis of the Indian tradition in order 'to feel out for the thought of the future, to help in shaping its foundations and to link it to the best and most vital thought of the past' (1998, p. 103). His unique combination of spiritual depth, intellectual rigour and clarity of exposition, combined with the astounding detail and precision with which he describes the psychological processes that help or mar our individual and collective evolution, make his writings an exceedingly rich store-house of insights in human nature and its development.

1. Four types of knowledge in the ordinary waking state

Sri Aurobindo locates the secret of human knowledge in depths of our being that may not be directly available to all of us, but there are links between the depths and the surface and at one place in his main philosophical work, *The Life Divine,* Sri Aurobindo distinguishes four types of knowledge that all occur within our ordinary surface awareness: knowledge by identity, knowledge by intimate direct contact, knowledge by separative direct contact, and separative knowledge by indirect contact (Aurobindo, 1990, pp. 524–532). The first of these, knowledge by identity, or *ātmavidyā*,[3] plays a central role in the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*, but is almost entirely ignored in contemporary science; aspects of the other three are known, respectively, as experiential knowledge, introspection, and the ordinary, sense-based knowledge of the outside physical world. Sri Aurobindo lists them, in harmony with the *Vedic* tradition, from the inside out: he starts with the knowledge of the Self, and ends with the knowledge of the outside world. I'll discuss them here in the modern sequence, starting with the outer world, and moving from there, slowly towards the deeper, inner realities.

1. **Separative knowledge by indirect contact** is the ordinary, sense-based knowledge that we have of the physical world around us. Sri Aurobindo calls it *separative* because it goes with a clear sense of separation between

the observer and the observed. He calls it *indirect*, because it is dependent on the physical senses. A tremendous collective effort goes at present into the development of this type of knowledge, and as it is the bedrock of science and technology, it plays an ever-increasing role in our society. It is this type of knowledge that makes the continuous stream of ever more fancy gadgets possible, and perhaps as a result of this, there is an increasing tendency to think that this is the only type of knowledge that really works and is worth cultivating.

2. **Knowledge by separative direct contact** has a much lower status both in contemporary science and society. When applied to ourselves, it is known as introspection, the knowledge we acquire when we try to look pseudo-objectively at what is going on inside ourselves. In this type of knowledge, the usual sense-organs are not needed and in that sense it is *direct*, but it is still *separative* because we try to look at what is going on inside ourselves 'objectively', that is, as if were looking at ourselves from the outside. Psychology cannot do very well without introspection, as it is the simplest, and in some areas the only way to find out what is going on inside one's mind, but it is notoriously difficult to make reliable. Classical behaviourism tried for many years to avoid it entirely, but at present psychology is making an extensive use of self-reports based on introspection. We will see later how the Indian tradition tackles the difficulties inherent in introspection and we will discuss some of the methods it uses to enhance introspection's reliability. I am inclined to think that these Indian methods are not only logically impeccable, but also indispensable if we want to take psychology forward.
3. **Knowledge by intimate direct contact** is the implicit knowledge we have of things in which we are directly involved. When applied to ourselves it is known as experiential knowledge. Sri Aurobindo calls it again *direct* because the sense organs are not required, and *by intimate contact* because one knows the processes that are taking place not by looking at them from the outside, but by being directly with them. When I'm very happy, for example, I need not observe myself to find out whether I am happy or not. If I would look at myself in a (pseudo-) objective manner, through introspection, I would say something like 'Hey, I'm happy', and this would imply a certain distance from the happiness. But I can also stay directly with the happiness, and exclaim, in full identification with my feelings, 'What a great day it is!' If I do the latter, I also know the state I am in, but not in a representative, objective manner. I know then what I am as if from within, through a direct intimacy with the inner state or process.[4] It might appear as if the introspective mode of knowing oneself goes more with the mind, while experiential knowledge, knowledge 'by being with', goes more with one's feelings and body-sense, but this is not always the case: When one fully identifies with one's thoughts, for example, there is a mixture: the thought itself belongs most likely to the

realm of 'separative knowledge', while the implicit, pre-reflective self-awareness of 'being busy thinking' belongs to the realm of 'knowledge by intimate direct contact'. Knowledge by intimate direct contact is used in many forms of therapy and all kind of psychological training programmes, but till now it does not seem to have received the theoretical attention it deserves.

4. **Knowledge by identity** is for Sri Aurobindo the first and most important of these four types of knowledge. In the ordinary waking state it is, however, hardly developed. The only thing we normally know entirely by identity is the sheer fact of our own existence. According to Sri Aurobindo it does play, however, a crucial role in all other types of knowing. In experiential knowledge (type 3) this is clear enough, as here we tend to identify with our experience. In introspection (type 2) it is less immediately apparent, as we do not fully identify with what we see, but try to observe what goes on inside ourselves, in as detached and 'objective' a manner as we can muster. Still, in introspection we recognize that what we look at is happening within our own being. In sense-based knowledge (type 1) the involvement of knowledge by identity is the least obvious, but even here knowledge by identity does play a role in at least two distinct ways: The first is that even though we normally feel a certain distance between ourselves and the things we observe 'outside' of us, we still see them as part of 'our world', we feel some inner, existential connection between ourselves and what we see. The degree of this sense of connectedness may, of course, differ. On one extreme, there are the mystics who feel in a very concrete sense 'one with the world'; on the other extreme, there are forms of schizophrenia, in which hardly any connection is felt between one's self and the world; the ordinary consciousness wavers somewhere between these extremes. The second manner by which knowledge by identity supports all other forms of knowledge is not through this existential sense of connectedness, but through the structural core of their cognitive content. According to Sri Aurobindo, the information the senses provide is far too incomplete and disjointed to create the wonderfully precise and coherent image that we make of the world. He holds that there must be some inner knowledge, some basic 'idea' about how the world should hang together, that helps to create meaning out of the raw impressions, which our senses provide. According to the Indian tradition knowledge by identity can provide this as it is the core-element of all forms of intuition,[5] and, as such, the source of the deep theories about reality that guide our perception, the fundamental rules of logical thinking, a large part of mathematics, and the ability to discriminate between what is true and false, real and unreal. Once fully developed and purified, Sri Aurobindo considers it the only type of knowledge that can be made completely reliable. Within Indian philosophy it is known as the knowledge of the Self, *ātmavidyā*, which

contains the largely subconscious link that exists between our individual consciousness and the cosmic consciousness that sustains the manifestation as a whole.

1. Separative knowledge by indirect contact Sense-based, constructed knowledge of the outer world. *Scientific knowledge*
2. Knowledge by separative direct contact Looking at one's own mental processes, 'as if from outside'. *Introspection*
3. Knowledge by intimate direct contact Awareness of one's own inner states 'by being with them'. *Experiential knowledge*
4. Knowledge by identity Awareness of the simple fact of one's own existence (details of self-concept provided by other three types). *Knowledge inherent in one's existence*

Table 16.1. Four types of knowledge in the ordinary waking state.

Mixed patterns

Before we can have a closer look at the possibility of developing true intuitive knowledge, we have to consider a few caveats which Sri Aurobindo himself mentions about this division of four distinct types of knowledge. The first one is that these four types of knowing are not entirely separate or exclusive of each other. There are smooth transitions between them, and in daily life they often occur mixed up together. When I am angry, for example, something in me stands apart and still knows that I am what I am, that the world is what it is, and that deep, deep within, in spite of anything that happens, all is well (type 4, knowledge by identity). And yet, I am also directly involved in getting angry. In fact, to some extent I become the anger (type 3, experiential knowledge). At the same time,[6] part of me watches what is going on in myself semi-objectively. I observe that I do not think clearly, that I have a cramp in my stomach and that there is a nagging fear in me that things are going wrong (type 2, introspection). While all this is going

on, I notice that I cannot speak very clearly, that my hands tremble and that the person I am talking to looks nonplussed about what I am so worked-up about (type 1, sense-based knowledge).

Not all knowledge is representational and intentional

A second issue is that of these four modes of knowing, only the first two are representational and intentional in the sense of being 'about something'.[7] To realize that there are types of knowledge that are not representational, one need not rise to any extraordinary state of *samādhi* or to some otherwise non-egoic consciousness. Even in perfectly ordinary states, when we feel happy to be alive, when we love the world, or just one special person in it, we know the state we are in, but the knowledge of this state is not representative, it is a knowledge embedded in our very being. We can subsequently take distance from that direct experience, look at it introspectively, and then describe what we then see in a third person, 'objective' format—the result is then representative knowledge of the introspective type, which is indeed intentional, but the original knowledge was not about something at all, it was simply itself.

Not all knowledge is constructed

A third thing to note is that underlying the four types of knowledge there are three, closely related gradients. The first is the gradient from the surface aspects of the outer world to our own inmost essence. The second is the gradient from gross matter, via mind, to pure spirit. The third is the gradient from knowledge which is constructed with difficulty out of diverse elements, to knowledge which comes directly, spontaneously, simply because it *is*. I will discuss the first two gradients in some more detail in the other sections, but the third gradient deals directly with the very essence of what knowledge actually is, and it needs to be taken up at least tentatively before we can move on.

According to the cognitive sciences, what we know in our ordinary consciousness about our environment is the result of a fantastically complex mental labour combining new sense-impressions with earlier findings. This complexity is supposed to be there equally in the way the individual makes sense of his own life in the world and in the way science builds up our collective knowledge base. But if Sri Aurobindo and the Indian tradition are right, then not all knowledge is 'constructed' in this complicated manner and there is a second type of knowledge that comes to us in the form of ready-made intuitions. This direct, intuitive apprehension of reality is part of what Sri Aurobindo calls knowledge by identity, and he holds that it plays a far greater role in our individual and collective life than we realize. There is fascinating evidence of the amazing extent to which perception is guided by expectations,[8] and according to Sri Aurobindo these expectations are not only informed by past experience and present circumstances but also by a deep intuitive knowledge of how the world should be by its own inherent logic, a logic of which we are aware, however dimly, because in our deepest essence we are one with it. In this chapter I will try to show that this idea is not as far-fetched as

it may seem to those who have been brought up with the idea that all knowledge comes from without.

According to the *Vedic* tradition, such inner knowledge can exist because it is a conscious energy *(cit-śakti*) that gives reality its shape and dynamism. Interestingly one can find implicit hints of similar ideas even in the informal language used by scientists. 'Applied' and 'pure' scientists have in their daily practice very different attitudes towards knowledge. Technical people, who work in the field of applied knowledge, typically see themselves as *inventing* new ways to use knowledge; pure scientists do not claim to invent, they claim to *discover* laws that have always been there. The technical man creates a new application; the pure scientist discovers a pre-existing truth and then tries to formulate it in the most elegant and useful manner. The difference between the two is, of course, not absolute, and if we look closely we see that in almost all our cognitive processes, there are elements of both. All formulated knowledge is partly discovery, partly construction. But the core question remains: Where did the knowledge hide before the scientists 'discovered' it? Did it exist only implicitly in the movements and patterns of nature from where the scientist abstracted it while formulating his laws and theoretical models?

The physicalist bias of mainstream Western science makes it hard for it to comprehend the intuitive component of knowledge. Hard-core physicalists like Daniel C. Dennett, for example, presume that this world is built entirely through dumbly mechanical or chance-driven processes (1994)[9] and argue that complex entities can be reduced without losing anything significant to their constituting components ('you are your neurons'). Within such a philosophical framework knowledge is ultimately based on sense-perceptions ('facts'), and there is no place for intuitive knowledge (except for the subconscious pseudo-variety). The Indian tradition, on the other hand, has no real problem with the existence of intuitive knowledge. In fact, the possibility of achieving a direct perception of the knowledge underlying reality is not only one of the ends aimed at by *yoga*, but also its historical and philosophical starting point: All authoritative texts on *yoga*, whether ancient or modern, are supposed to have been received through such a direct perception of truths behind reality, whether through direct vision of truth, *dṛṣṭi*, revelation; or through direct hearing of truth, *śruti*, inspiration. Given the present predominance of Dennett's worldview, it becomes useful to consider how one might move from the narrower materialist's view to the much more comprehensive, and, I would say, more coherent, Indian one.

The knowledge in things

When we say that science has discovered a certain law of physics, the phrase we use implies that the law existed beforehand, but if that is so, where was it before discovery, and what form did it have? It is clear that it cannot have had the same linguistic or mathematical form as it now has in the human mind, but the fabulous beauty, order and lawfulness of nature does suggest that there must be in matter at least some kind of built-in order, which we could look at as a kind of

subconscious know-how, not dissimilar to the implicit know-how humans have of complex skills like cycling. To recognize the inner structure of matter as a form of know-how, one might look at the knowledge-constituent of matter as a subconscious habit of form, a tendency to act in harmony with the basic *dharma*[10] of the physical entity in question: an electron 'knows' how to behave like an electron, a hydrogen molecule how to behave like a hydrogen molecule, a rock like a rock, and a river like a river.

Interestingly, the information content needed to do so is not as small as it may appear at first sight. As matter makes no mistakes, every part of it needs to have the 'know-how' required to act perfectly according to the laws that guide its movement. As the laws of physics are supposed to be interrelated and derivable from each other, this might well mean that in some extremely involved way, it has to be aware of all the laws that keep our universe together. What is more, as matter's movements are influenced, to whatever small degree, by everything else that occurs in the universe, each part has to be perfectly aware, in however implicit a manner, of everything else that is going on. Together this amounts to a rather staggering kind of 'subconscient omniscience' which in a fully automatic fashion self-limits itself to the very simple set of dumb but perfect actions that are proper to each little part of reality. One could of course argue that even if this complete knowledge has to be there in every part, it is still far too implicit, far too 'involved' to be extracted. In practice this may be true, at least for the moment, but it does not change the basic principle, and thus the potential.

In the *Vedic* ontology the universe is a manifestation of consciousness, and it holds, like many ancient philosophical systems, that the knowledge that is implicitly embedded in the physical reality, is a reflection from realms of pure knowledge that exist permanently and inalienably, parallel to and in a sense 'far above'[11] the physical world. More interesting for psychology, it holds that since our individual consciousness is in its essence still one with the consciousness that engenders the universe, there arises the possibility of aligning our own individual consciousness to the knowledge that is built-in in the very structure of the universe. In other words there is a possibility of genuine, spontaneous, and perfect intuitive knowledge and action, which can arise in us because the world and all that is in it is in its essence one with the essence of our own being.[12]

As discussed earlier in our discussion of knowledge by identity, the constructed representational knowledge science consists of is in this context seen as a mixture of knowledge and ignorance, an attempt instigated and aided but also limited and distorted by our senses, that in this complex manner can arrive at a progressively more accurate reflection inside our brain-based individual mind-stuff of the basic knowledge structures that underlie the actual workings of the manifestation. Indications of such mixtures of sense-based and direct intuitive knowledge can be found in all fields of human endeavour: in mathematics and logic, in the sudden insights that lead to a new revolution in technology, and in lines of poetry that haunt the reader because of their unearthly perfection, their 'inevitability' as Sri Aurobindo calls it.[13] One could perhaps even find traces of direct, intuitive

knowledge in less momentous but highly satisfactory moments of 'right action', when one simply knows from within what is to be done at a given moment.

But before we can proceed to discuss how our access to this intuitive knowledge can be cultivated, we need to get clear on one more essential distinction. This is the distinction between ordinary introspection, in which one looks with one part of one's mind at all the other activities that take place inside one's nature, and the perception that occurs through a pure witness consciousness, *sākṣī*.

Of birds and balconies

There is a common notion, equally widespread, for example, in contemporary consciousness studies as in classical *pramāṇa*-based Buddhist and Indian epistemology, that one cannot at the same time observe the world, and be aware of oneself observing it. The standard logical argument against doing both at the same time is that this would lead to infinite regress: one observes that one observes that one observes, and so on, and on, and on. The simpler, but perhaps even more convincing, symbolical image is that one cannot stand at the same time on a balcony and walk in the street. So it is argued, and in ordinary introspection one can actually observe this, that one switches very quickly between looking at the outside world and looking at the memory of how one looked at the outside world just a moment earlier. One possible reason for the mutual exclusiveness of perception and self-awareness in our ordinary waking consciousness might be that they function through the same inner instrumentation: In the Indian terminology, it is the same *manas*, or sense-mind, which in our ordinary consciousness either looks at the outside world through the outer senses, or at the inner world through the inner senses. The *manas* may simply not be able to do both at the same time.

There is, however, a second way of observing oneself that actually can take place at the same time as any outer or inner action. This second type of self-observation can easily be confused with ordinary introspection, but it has an entirely different character. The main difference is that it is not based on an activity by the mind, but on a direct apprehension of reality by a pure witness consciousness (*sākṣī*). This second type of self-observation is depicted in the ancient Indian image of two birds, good friends, beautiful of feather, who sit in the same tree: one eats the fruit while the other watches (*Ṛg Veda* I. 164. 2). Here what watches is not the separative, ego-centric, and sense-mediated surface mind, but a deep, silent, non-egoic, all-inclusive, pure consciousness that allows the egoic actions (and even the egoic observations) to continue somewhere in its own infinitude without being perturbed by them. As there is no egoic centre and no boundaries to this background awareness, the question of recursion does not arise. The core issue here is that the consciousness that watches must be 'pure' and utterly silent. If for some reason the 'running commentary', which is so typical of the surface mind, intrudes and one notices, 'Hey, look, I'm watching what is going on from my deep silent inner self!', one obviously has lost it, and gone back to the ordinary, ego-based introspection.

Introspection	Pure witness consciousness
looking with one part of the mind at other parts of the mind (and at the rest of one's nature)	observing the workings of one's nature from the position of a pure, silent witness
giving a running commentary; volunteering value judgements; reacting to what it observes	silently watching in perfect equanimity
intrinsically prejudiced	equal to all that comes up
limited to the ordinary waking consciousness	able to penetrate deeper layers of consciousness and being

Table 16.2. Introspection versus pure witness consciousness.

In practice, these two different types of inner apprehension are not entirely exclusive of each other, and there is a certain gradient between them. As one becomes only gradually more settled in the deeper, inner silence, it is possible to arrive first at an in-between status of consciousness from which one introspectively observes what one is doing (type 2), and yet retains some intimate contact (of type 3) with a deep inner vastness of silent awareness (of type 4). In this state one is aware of the presence of pure consciousness as a kind of background for the superficial mental activity in which one is involved, but one identifies more with the mental activity on the surface than with the wider consciousness in the background. Only when one goes still deeper within, one begins to centre in that vastness itself. Then one sees, supports and sanctions from deep within the activities of the surface mind without losing in any way one's real 'identity' (if that term still applies) as the all-including vastness. One is then a borderless infinitude in which one is aware through knowledge by identity (type 4) of the entire stream of events, including birds and people, streets and balconies, which peacefully continue to exist somewhere on the surface of one's being. It is this second way of watching in an absolute inner silence, which is claimed to produce knowledge by identity, not only of one's own innermost self, but, potentially, of anything in existence.

It may be noted that in spite of its 3D imagery, the street and balcony simile presumes a 'flat' concept of consciousness in which exclusivity reigns—one can either observe oneself *or* the world, one is either the observing subject *or* the observed world, and so on. The image of the two birds, on the other hand, is based on a totally different multidimensional concept of consciousness and reality. Here the dichotomies that perplex our mind are easily resolved in a higher-order unity.

In our interpretation of this ancient image, the tree inhabited by two birds represents the relation between the world and two major aspects or portions of our self. The tree-world of the first bird called *nara* (man) belongs to the ordinary waking consciousness and is exclusive, enmeshed in time and causality. This bird 'eats the fruits': he is fully engrossed in life and suffers the consequences of his actions. The world of the second bird, Nārāyaṇa (the Supreme), is part of an all-inclusive consciousness, containing all time and all opposites within itself. Nārāyaṇa watches in the Vedāntic, non-dual sense of the *sākṣī*, and remains unaffected by *karma*. Interestingly, and typical of the ancient, even-handed love for man and God, the birds are mentioned as good friends, and both as 'beautiful of feather'.[14]

If there is any truth in the distinctions and possibilities mentioned so far, then the next question is, how do we move from the superficial and often erratic knowledge provided by the observation of outer behaviour and ordinary introspection, to a more penetrating and reliable insight in the deeper layers of the mind.

2. Perfecting the inner instruments of knowledge

Sources of error

Over the long history of India's thinking about these issues, many different descriptions of the mind's difficulties have been given and many different solutions have been proposed to overcome them. Ego and desire are probably most frequently mentioned as factors leading to unhappiness, ignorance and distorted knowledge. The factor most commonly indicated as leading to bliss and unbiased knowledge is perfect detachment.

A slightly different perspective is offered by Sri Aurobindo in two interesting passages of *The Synthesis of Yoga*. He describes here the basic defects of the ordinary human mind as essentially of two kinds, *immixture* and *improper functioning* (1999, pp. 298, 618). Both can best be understood in the context of Sri Aurobindo's vision of an ongoing evolution of consciousness.[15] Within this framework of a gradually evolving consciousness, he sees these two basic defects of the mind as essentially due to the stickiness of our evolutionary past.

Immixture. Immixture happens when an earlier and more primitive form of consciousness interferes in a higher or later form. A typical example occurs when two people discuss a theoretical question. Their minds are genuinely interested in finding out what is true, because the quest for truth is part of the basic *dharma* of the mind. But when the vital part of their natures interferes, things go haywire. The vital part of human nature is not concerned with truth. The natural tendency of the life-force, which we have inherited from the animal stage of evolution, is survival, self-assertion, possession. So when the vital part of the nature enters into the debate, the stress is no longer on finding out what is true, but on who will win the argument. If the vital part of our nature is sufficiently purified, it will obey the mind and enjoy whatever it offers—a pure vital nature will be happy if the truth has been found irrespective of who has won the argument. But if an unregenerate

part of the vital nature dominates over the mind, it will insist on winning, even to the extent of tempting the mind to bring in false arguments.

Improper functioning. ***m***In harmony with the idealistic nature of his *Vedic* philosophy, Sri Aurobindo holds that for each part of our nature there are 'ideal' or proper ways of functioning, as well as improper ways. For the vital nature the proper functioning includes an equal, glad enjoyment of whatever happens. The mixture of happiness, pain and indifference, of desires and fears from which the ordinary waking state suffers, is the result of the gradual and as of now only partially completed evolution of the vital nature out of the totally involved nescience of matter. Similarly the ideal function of the mind is to receive in a complete passivity the knowledge that sustains the world and to express it in the physical life-form it inhabits. What the unregenerate mind does instead, again due to remnants of its slow emergence out of the stupor of matter and the ignorance of the life in which it grows up, is to strive after knowledge, construct it in an ever more complicated, but never fully satisfactory confusion.

One could summarize these two defects of the mind as the 'noisiness' of the ordinary mind. Just as perfect joy can only be received in a heart that is wide, calm, and completely free of desire and attachment, so also true knowledge can only be received in a wide and calm mind that is completely free of mental preferences and distortions. The deeper one tries to enter into the recesses of one's inner nature, the more imperative becomes the need for a complete silence of the observing consciousness. Just as fine physical measurements demand a vibration-free room, so also in psychology, to reach the deepest layers of one's being, a silent mind is essential. To silence the mind is of such importance that Patañjali describes it as nothing less than the central objective of *yoga* and Sri Aurobindo describes it sometimes as an essential step for deeper knowledge and sometimes as the ultimate essence itself.[16] If this is so, then how is it done, how do we purify and ultimately silence the mind?

The purification of the mind

Most people who try to silence their mind soon realize that they have little control over their thoughts and that thoughts seem to come and go on their own. When one looks more closely, one sees that the vast majority of these mechanical thoughts that go on ruminating in one's mind are triggered by sense-impressions, and that they draw their energy from often trivial physical and social needs and desires. The latter issue we have already discussed: an absolute prior condition for silencing the mind is to avoid what Sri Aurobindo calls immixture of the unregenerate vital in the mind's workings. The necessity to overcome desires is mentioned in practically all spiritual traditions and is directly related to the two defects of immixture and improper functioning we mentioned earlier. As we discussed there, desire is itself a deformation of the vital's true nature, and its interference in the mind's workings is the main obstacle to direct and unbiased insight. The most obvious way to achieve silence in the mind is thus either to isolate the mind from the vital part of the nature, or, for a more lasting result, to quieten and purify the vital nature itself.

Freeing the mind from negative vital influences is, however, not sufficient as the mind itself has its own defects. Sri Aurobindo mentions three conditions that need to be met if we want to arrive at deeper and more reliable inner knowledge:

Freedom from the senses. The first defect of the ordinary mind is that it is too dependent on the senses, and that it gets triggered too easily by their input. To keep the mind detached from the senses is common enough in ordinary concentration (when you read a book, you do not hear the street noise), but more difficult when there is no obvious focus of attention to keep the mind engaged. Yet, this is needed to create the space for more subtle perceptions to enter our consciousness.

Freedom from the past and future. The second defect of the mind is that it is too anxious. This form of improper functioning is in essence the same as the main defect in the vital. The vital part of our nature is too anxious to be happy, and as a consequence it loses its inherent peace and joy and gets instead lost in a jumble of desires and fears. When the mind is too anxious it first grabs intuitions (or even sense-impressions) too eagerly, then builds all kind of unwarranted extrapolations on them, and finally it sticks too tenaciously to the little it has found. To continue to grow in knowledge, one should always remain quiet, accept what comes, and yet remain open to what comes next (Aurobindo, 1999, pp. 315–316). The solution is thus the same as for the immixture and the clinging to the senses: one should retain a perfect equanimity, detachment and a vast inner calm.

Silence of the mind. Sri Aurobindo describes several methods to silence the mind (e.g. 1999, p. 324). The easiest, most commonly advocated but perhaps not the fastest method, is to let the mind run its own course but to withdraw one's interest and sanction. If one manages to consistently refuse engagement in the thoughts that pass through one's mind, they slowly die out. The stress, however, is on the 'if', and on the 'slowly'. The second method is to enter with the centre of one's consciousness into a realm of silence that pre-exists in an inner space deep within the heart or well above the mind.[17] The third is to call this same pre-existent silence down into one's mind, heart and even body. The fourth is probably the most efficient, but also the most strenuous method. Here one distances oneself again completely from what goes on in one's mind, and then one stays on guard and systematically throws out every thought as soon as it enters into one's awareness. This is effective but it requires the ability to centre oneself in one's mental *puruṣa*, one's real, innermost Self on the level of the mind, and yet remain active. There are many other methods, but the core of most, if not all, is to distance oneself from the activities of the mind and vital and to watch whatever goes on inside one's nature as an absolutely disinterested outsider. This is not an ultimate truth or a stance that can remain: in due time one finds that everything, even outer things, are actually part of oneself, but it is an effective means to get rid of the partial, ego-based identifications. The feelings of 'I'm me and not you', 'I like this and not that', 'I believe this and not that' are the effective cause both of our suffering and of our inability to see reality as it is.

3. Inner knowledge

If one would like to give a label to the ontology that underlies the theory of knowledge that I've tried to present here, then one could call it a strong form of *realistic idealism*. In philosophical texts there is a tendency to view idealism and realism as opposites, but Sri Aurobindo sees no inherent conflict between the two. He writes in *The Life Divine*, 'The world is real precisely because it exists only in consciousness; for it is a Conscious Energy one with Being that creates it' (1940/90, p. 22). In line with the *Vedic* tradition he holds that it is a conscious energy that manifests the world, and thus that knowledge is present throughout creation, even if largely implicitly embedded in the 'habit of form' of material objects. Just as in a rock it is consciousness that gives that rock its particular form and qualities, there is also in man a very close link between our consciousness and the form and functioning of our body—the ordinary human consciousness identifies itself with its material substrate. Seen from this angle, the only difference between the rock and the human is that in case of the human being, the substrate includes an immensely complex nervous system capable of (re)presenting to itself a small stretch of the physical and social world around it. As a result our consciousness tends to identify with the centre of that representation, and especially with our individual memories, body-sense, feelings, desires, ideas, social roles, etc. But, interestingly, in man consciousness need not remain entangled in the workings of the body and the nervous system. It appears that once our little chunk of biologically embedded consciousness is sufficiently individualised and self-aware, it can learn to free itself from its physical encasement.

The Indian tradition has found that once the consciousness emancipates sufficiently from the body, several forms of inner knowledge open up to it, that can be grouped under the last two of the four types of knowledge I discussed in the beginning of this chapter, knowledge by intimate direct contact and knowledge by identity. As discussed earlier, these two are closely related: there is a gradient of intermediate forms of knowing in between them, and an increasing proficiency in one often, though certainly not always, leads to a more frequent occurrence of the other.[18] Still, for the sake of mental clarity it is good to distinguish them, if only because they belong to two entirely different epistemic realms: knowledge by intimate direct contact is still, just as sense-based knowledge and introspection, the result of a contact, however direct and subtle, between the self and something considered not oneself. As a consequence it is, in the radical language of the *Vedic* tradition, still considered to be a form of *avidyā*, no-knowledge or ignorance. Knowledge by identity, on the other hand, is the pure faculty of knowledge, *vidyā*, that is inherent in all being. In humans, it is to be found in its pure form only in the *puruṣa*, our silent, innermost Self. The aspect of knowledge by identity we will discuss in this section is the possibility to know as if from within things that ordinarily are not considered to be part of one's own individual self. According to the Indian tradition this is possible because in its very essence everything is one, is *Brahman*. The condition however is, and this is a difficult condition, that we must

have disentangled our consciousness completely from the little chunk of nature we ordinarily identify with, our ego. From that absolute freedom it is considered possible to know everyone, everything, every event, with a total perfection, 'in the way God knows it'.

Two forms of knowledge by identity

I will discuss here two varieties of knowledge by identity. Within the inner realms of our psychological nature, one can distinguish an intriguing system of two intersecting dimensions, one reaching from the surface ego inwards to the soul, and one rising upwards from the subconscient below, via the physical, the vital and the mind in between, to the superconscient spirit and the Self above.[19] Along both dimensions one can find entry-points to the realms of direct inner knowledge, and, interestingly, they lead to different aspects of this knowledge, some primarily personal, others in the first instance impersonal. Before we go into more detail about these two dimensions, it may be useful to come back once more to the difference between constructed and direct knowledge.

Direct and constructed knowledge revisited

There are plenty of indications in ordinary life that direct, intuitive knowledge indeed does exist. A mathematician typically first 'sees' the solution to a problem, and only then works out the logical steps that 'prove' he is right. It is presumed that he has followed, unconsciously, the same steps of the proof to arrive at his first insight, but this is just a conjecture, which is far from certain. Similarly, an inventor, writer, composer typically first 'gets' an idea and only then works it out. According to contemporary cognitive sciences, the idea is actually constructed and only seems to pop-up in one's consciousness as a ready-made product because almost all the processing remains unconscious. But if one learns to quieten one's mind and to attain to a state of sufficient clarity within, one can actually *see* how ideas arise. One discovers then that new insights sometimes do arise in the way modern psychology describes—Sri Aurobindo calls this 'pseudo-intuition' because it imitates the real thing—but occasionally, and especially when the mind is silent, the real thing itself also happens. At such moments, one can observe how an unformed idea drifts into one's mind as if from another realm, and only subsequently gets clad, dressed-up as it were, in words and images that seem to be provided by the individual's outer mind, perhaps from a brain-based stock of material. It even happens sometimes that ideas 'pop-up' completely formed, in 'inevitable' words or images. It appears then as if all knowledge consists of a core of direct, intuitive material, clad in an outer casing provided by the senses, with a gradient in the percentage of direct and constructed knowledge. St. John of the Cross gives a vivid description of the fine distinctions between those different 'degrees' of inspiration and of some possible causes of the variance between the proportion of descending and constructed material (Steele, 1994). He also describes how the descending idea may come direct from the highest and purest layers of consciousness one has access to, or how it may come from intermediary

layers or even from active agents that can have distorted the expression to suit their own agenda.

In the surface consciousness that provides the experiential ground for most modern philosophical speculation, it may look as if reality is divided by an absolute, Cartesian dichotomy in gross, inconscient matter on one side, and our thoughts on the other (with, for those who believe in it, an extra-cosmic Divinity beyond both). But inner experience supports rather the idea that there is a smooth gradient between matter and pure spirit. Inner experience confirms the idea, which the *Vedic* tradition has in common with virtually all other spirituality-based schools of thought, that there actually is a whole range of worlds connecting the Absolute with the manifest world we all know. The *Vedic* tradition holds that the physical world is ultimately a condensation of consciousness, and it has worked out the transitions from the subtle to gross levels in great detail, for example in its description of the different worlds (or 'births'), and the various sheets of consciousness. These inner realities and their interconnections are extremely complex, and it is not easy to recognize the underlying structure and even more difficult to place different experiences correctly into the whole. As a result many different ways to bring some order into it all have been suggested, but for our present enquiry in the nature of knowledge, the simple distinction mentioned earlier between an inward horizontal, and an upward vertical dimension is particularly useful, both from a theoretical and from a practical viewpoint.

Knowledge from within

A first approach to inner knowledge is by an inward movement from the surface consciousness that characterizes the ordinary waking state, through the subliminal intermediate layers of our inner nature, to our innermost, true being, the *puruṣa*. Though ultimately there is only one Being, one Consciousness, one Self, the *paramātman* forever one with Brahman, transcending, supporting and inhabiting the manifestation in its entirety, the *Vedic* tradition recognizes not only that every individual being also has its own Self, but that even within the complexity of each individual being, there exist different Selves on each of the various planes (*koṣas*) of consciousness on which it exists. On each plane the *puruṣa* is our true Self, the silent witness, the support, and ultimately the master of our nature. Though the *puruṣa* is pure consciousness, and not affected by the *guṇas* (the various qualities that characterize manifest nature) still the characteristic experience of the *puruṣa* differs according to the plane on which it is found. Though everywhere silent, vast, unaffected, on the mental plane it is the aspect of the witness that dominates, in the higher vital that of love and compassion, in the lower vital planes that of joy and strength, and so on. There are two forms or 'instances' of the Self that stand out, one that stays eternally, immutably above the individual manifestation, also called the *jīvātman*, and another, the innermost self that sustains and inhabits the incarnate being as a whole, the *caitya puruṣa*, or *antarātman*. The former I will discuss further in the next section on 'Knowledge from above', about the latter I will discuss a few points here.

The *caitya puruṣa* is found behind the heart *cakra,*[20] where, if one goes deep enough, one finds what has been called the inner oracle, the guide within, one's deepest, innermost soul, *antarātman* or *caitya puruṣa*. Sri Aurobindo calls it the *psychic being*. In its own realm, in the depths of its own being, the psychic being is felt as a centre of true, self-luminous perfection; it is the source in us of our deepest aspirations, of true love, goodwill, compassion and a deep inner joy and gratitude. Sri Aurobindo describes it as a direct expression of the very being of the Divine immanent within us. It is the one part of us that can manage simultaneously to remain perfectly faithful to its own essential nature (*svabhāva*) and yet be in a perfect, dynamic harmony with the manifestation as it unfolds from moment to moment in and around it.

In terms of knowledge, the psychic being is the one part in us that is completely one with truth, and yet, as long as one lives in the surface personality, the guidance which the surface mind receives from the psychic being cannot always be perfect, for it reaches the surface consciousness through the intermediaries of one's heart and mind, and they can easily distort its messages. In terms of force also, deep inside the psychic being has the perfection of power inherent in its truth, but on the surface its strength cannot manifest easily or openly because there it is bound by the limitations of one's instrumental nature. Only to the extent that the inner channels are clear and open, can its guidance be reliable and its action effective. Though it knows whatever one needs to know at any given moment, it is only when one's inner instruments of knowledge are pure enough that its gentle voice can be trusted to give the immediate and perfect guidance for the best possible action.

Knowledge from above

The other entry-point to direct knowledge is reached not by an inward movement, but by a movement of the centre of one's consciousness upwards, through the *sahasrāra*, the highest of the seven *cakras*, the seven centres of consciousness in one's subtle being. Through this *cakra* one opens up into the higher planes of consciousness and being, which, like a ladder, climb up into ranges that are felt as leading to the very origin of creation. These realms of higher knowledge are by their very nature impersonal. According to Sri Aurobindo, for most people the route through the heart is the most easy and natural, but for some people this ascent is the easiest way to move out of the individual mind into the cosmic vastness.

An interesting difference between the inner and higher knowledge is that the knowledge that comes by going inside tends to be situational: it typically gives an indication for 'right action', for what to do or what to say in the here and now. The knowledge one reaches by moving upward, on the other hand, tends to be more abstract and generic. Immediately above the mind there is, for example, a realm where one participates in comprehensive, global patterns of thought. If one concentrates on a philosophical issue while in that world[21] one immediately sees how a wide variety of related ideas hang together. To use a school-child's image, it is a bit as if one reads the pages at the end of a dream-quality schoolbook where

all the answers are kept together in a perfectly contextualized manner: one sees not only the perfect answer to the question raised, but even the answers to a wide variety of related questions. Sri Aurobindo calls this world the Higher Mind. As it gives such an impression of impersonal, all-comprehensive perfection, it can easily be mistaken for the Gnostic or 'unitary' consciousness, but it is still very far below it: what one experiences here is not the Gnostic consciousness itself but only a more or less luminous shadow of it within the realm of the mind. Immediately above the Higher Mind there are realms where the relations between things and processes are not known in words or thoughts, but seen or felt as luminous images and presences. The higher one goes, the more the sense of perfection, unity and truth increases, but the more difficult it becomes to express what one experiences in words, because our ordinary language consists of words indicating dualities that are far surpassed in those higher realms.

There are two quite different ways in which one can make this upward movement. The first approach is a kind of jump, or at least a very quick climb, by which one moves more or less directly from one's ordinary consciousness to the Absolute by a systematic rejection of all thoughts and feelings that might arise in between. If one manages to do so, this is a very effective process and it can produce dramatic results in an amazingly short time. But the disadvantage is that this procedure leaves a gap between the consciousness in one's ordinary state and the higher state. One reaches the Absolute in some kind of trance or *samādhi* and one cannot carry a detailed memory of either the Supreme Reality or the intermediate layers back to one's ordinary state. What such experiences do leave behind, however, is the certainty of having reached a Truth and Bliss so absolute that compared to it, all the imperfections and sufferings of the ordinary world lose their relevance. The power and felicity of this experience may be one of the reasons why so many great saints and sages, in the West as well as in the East, have looked at the manifestation as a lesser aspect of the Divine or even as an unreal farce that needs to be surpassed and left behind if one wants to reach the Divine in His/Her/Its absolute essence. Given how infinitely (literally!) more perfect the Absolute seems to be than anything in between, it is understandable that many great mystics have advised to forget about all lower experience and concentrate directly and exclusively on the highest.

Sri Aurobindo, however, takes the dynamic unfolding of the world as an aspect of the Divine that has as much importance as the static, absolute essence. He looks at our imperfect world simply as a 'work in progress'. Sri Aurobindo's stress on the value of life in the world is related to his vision of an ongoing evolution of consciousness of which he sees the next stage as the physical embodiment of *vijñāna*[22], the Gnostic, supra-mental plane of truth-consciousness that according to him must be the ultimate origin of the manifest world. It may be clear that an organic embodiment of such an absolute truth-consciousness would require an extremely drastic transformation of human nature. To get a handle on the details of this process of transformation, a comprehensive understanding of all the intermediate layers of consciousness is required, which can only come through a

second approach to the higher ranges of consciousness for which Sri Aurobindo found many references in the *Vedas*. In this approach one climbs slowly and meticulously, step by step, a kind of inner stairs that rises from below right up to the highest planes, delivering the detailed knowledge as one goes.[23]

Though this goes beyond the immediate topic of this chapter, it is interesting to note that Sri Aurobindo insists for this approach to knowledge on a double movement, which is mentioned throughout the *Vedas*, but which in later times seems to have been forgotten except in some lesser known *Tantric* schools—one climbing from the ordinary mind, through all the intermediate layers of higher mind, illumined mind, intuition up to the overmind, and one descending, a 'bringing down' of these higher capacities and powers back into oneself. One finds this movement mentioned throughout the *Vedas* as the request for the gods 'to increase' in the person on whose behalf the *Vedic* sacrifice is made. If the *Vedic* gods are taken in their esoteric sense as the higher powers of the human mind, then it becomes clear how closely the *Vedic* image of a material sacrifice matches what Sri Aurobindo describes as a psychological process of ascent and integration: one has first to reach, connect with, and 'realize' the higher faculties of *Indra* (the illumined mind), *Agni* (the will and aspiration), the *Vāyus* (the barrier breakers), and many others, and then make them an integral part of one's nature. Where Sri Aurobindo differs from the *Vedas* is that he seems to expand the range over which this process of ascent and integration can be made to work. At the high end, some of the *Upaniṣads* but especially the later Vedāntic texts seem to jump directly from the Overmental plane of Indra—where there are still fights between gods and *asuras* (mental forces of good and evil)—to the plane of *ānanda*, the plane of perfect bliss and oneness. Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, focuses on the *vijñāna*, the supra-mental link plane between the lower and higher hemispheres, where there is a simultaneous existence of perfect oneness and variety. At the low end, Sri Aurobindo tries to anchor this Gnostic plane in the physical reality, and to make it an organic part of our evolutionary, biological nature.

4. Yoga as research tool

If there is indeed, as the Indian tradition claims, a knowledge that can be apprehended directly from within without the necessity of mediation by the senses, then this has major consequences for the choice of the optimum methodology in psychological research. There where such direct inner knowledge refers to phenomena in the external world, one can indeed decide on the accuracy of the inner knowledge 'objectively' by comparing the symbolic rendering of that inner knowledge with the symbolic rendering of sense information about the external events. But where the inner knowledge refers to inner states or processes, this may not be the appropriate way of verifying such knowledge. What we need there is not objectivity, but reliable subjectivity.

In our study of the outer world, progress is to a large extent made by using better and better instruments. What 'better' means here depends to some extent

on the field: in astronomy 'better' might mean for example higher resolution, higher and more specific sensitivity combined with less noise and distortion. Wherever possible, the results are then corroborated with findings from others with different but equally reliable instruments. Where the quality of the findings cannot be ascertained through comparison with findings made by different observers, instruments and experimental pathways, the inherent logic of the instrument's construction plays a major role in our assessments of their reliability. I suggest that we can apply the same ideas to the inner domain. In the inner domain the instrument of choice is self-observation, which includes knowledge by intimate direct contact, knowledge by identity, and the pure witness consciousness (*sākṣī*). Just as in the physical domain, the quality of the results in the inner domain can be ascertained on the one hand through corroboration by equally or better qualified observers, and on the other hand by the intrinsic quality of the instrument. The latter can in its turn be ascertained to some extent, though never fully, by what that specific instrument delivers in comparatively better known fields of enquiry. The only difference is that in the inner domain, the instrument is not some physical instrument, but the inner instrument of knowledge, the *antaḥkaraṇa*, of the *yogi*-researcher. The quality of this instrument depends on things like the amount of immixture and improper functioning; its freedom from ego, vital desires, mental preferences and physical limitations; its sensitivity, flexibility, and ability to move at will through different inner worlds and centres of consciousness; etc. In other words, *yoga*, in its widest sense of spiritual discipline, is the method of choice to perfect the inner instrument of knowledge. It leads to a more comprehensive, impartial and harmony enhancing understanding of reality not only through the purification of the inner instrument, but also by raising the observing consciousness above its ordinary, corrupting and limiting involvement in the processes and entities that psychology is supposed to study. That it can indeed deliver is attested to by the incredibly rich Indian heritage in the psychological field.

In short, for the outer periphery of psychology, objective population surveys and behavioural studies may be appropriate, but for the inner core-territory, the legitimate heartland of psychology that consists of the deep movements of consciousness, what we need are reliable subjective methods. For those subjective methods, self-reports are *not* the original data: they are at most part of the reporting. Even introspection, as defined in the beginning of this article, is in itself not the right research method to reach the deeper layers. The actual research consists of the processes that take place in the inner worlds themselves. They can only be ascertained by a silent witness consciousness in a deep inner self-observation. Subsequently this inner knowledge can be brought to the surface and shared with others, as long as we acknowledge that its veracity can only be ascertained by those who have access to the same inner worlds with the help of inner instruments of knowledge that are similar or better in quality. One could, perhaps, look at this as a reprehensible form of occult elitism, but it need not be. The situation might be close to that in physics where one cannot expect results unless one has a good

grasp of mathematical and instrumental methods. I'm inclined to think that *yoga* has a very similar role to play in the advancement of Psychology, as mathematics and physical instrumentation have in physics. It can improve the quality of the inner instrument of knowledge and make us more open to sources of direct knowledge. Which of the many entirely different methods and techniques of *yoga* are the most suitable for incorporation into Psychology, is one of the major tasks for Indian Psychology to take up in the coming years.

5. Evaluation and conclusion

When a little girl looks up to us, it is up to us whether we want to see that her dress is untidy, that her English needs correction, or that the heavens from which we all come are visible just behind the surface of these wide, wondering eyes. Even if we consider it our duty to tinker with the details of the outer manifestation of this subtle wonder, it still helps to remain aware of the deeper inner realities, however deeply buried in the background of our consciousness. At the very least, that inner connectedness will help us to avoid the worst forms of cruel insanity to which our human race is so amazingly prone. At its best, it may help to bring about a more harmonious world for future generations to enjoy.

If Sri Aurobindo and the *Vedic* tradition on which he builds are right, then direct, intuitive knowledge by identity forms the essential core of all our knowledge, and especially of our basic sense of truth, beauty, meaning, love, self, and reality. We may doubt whether we as individuals can ever hope to develop intuitive knowledge to the level of detailed perfection that Sri Aurobindo and the *Vedic* tradition assert to be possible. But even if there were only a remote chance that such a type of knowledge actually exists and that it can be cultivated, it would still be worthwhile to give it, both individually and collectively, much more attention than we presently do. The least the methods of *yoga*, especially *jñāna yoga*, can contribute to Psychology are well-developed methods for the study of the subjective side of our psychological nature, methods that work through a systematic removal of the imperfections of introspection, and through a rigorous refinement of the inner instrument of knowledge (*antaḥkaraṇa*) so that it can penetrate the deeper layers of consciousness that are described throughout the Indian tradition but that are not accessible in our ordinary mental states.

There is, however, another, and perhaps more important reason to pursue the systematic development of knowledge by identity and that is simply, that *if* it exists, it is the type of knowledge humanity needs most at the moment. All major human problems are problems of harmony (Aurobindo, 1990, p. 2), and the kind of direct, intuitive knowledge we've discussed in this chapter may well be one of the most direct ways to find that harmony back. After all, the core of the intuitive knowledge Sri Aurobindo speaks about is nothing else than the ancient *ātmavidyā*, the knowledge of the self[24] at a level where the individual self is consciously one with the cosmic Self, and through that, with the individual selves of all others. As such, it is the knowledge that reconnects us to our common source and that

supports our communality as well as our essential individuality. As a result, the pursuit of knowledge by identity can provide answers to our deepest need for love and harmony, and it can give humanity the wisdom and power it so desperately needs to heal the many wounds and distortions that now mar both our individual human natures and our collective existence. So even if the chances of finding this knowledge were exceedingly small, the gamble would still be worth it. But, fortunately, the chance of finding this knowledge is not small at all.

Though mainstream science ignores and in her more dogmatic moments even denies its existence, intuitive knowledge has played a major role in all known civilizations. It is true that some cultures have held it to be something of a gift that cannot be cultivated, but there are many other cultures that have worked out methods to develop it, and in India, where spirituality has been the very foundation of the mainstream culture right from the beginning of known history, there are several highly sophisticated and intellectually rigorous systems of ideas on how it can be developed. So actually, collectively, we not only know that this knowledge is there, but we even know how to develop it.

At the end of his wonderfully detailed history of spiritual movements in the U.S.A., Eugene Taylor comes to the conclusion that we can expect over the coming years a growing influence of Indian ideas on the developing global civilization, and especially a major shift in its basic epistemological assumptions, away from materialism and in the direction of Indian spirituality (1999, pp. 289–296). Taylor considers it an open question whether this growing reliance on spiritual knowledge will develop as part of science, or as an independent, parallel knowledge system that will gradually gain in prominence, as people begin to realize how much it can contribute to our understanding of human nature (ibid. p. 285). To what extent spirituality and science can and should merge or collaborate is a complicated issue, but there seems very little inherent reason why they should not join hands at least in some key areas. The almost complete separation of the knowledge systems of spirituality and science that we see at present seems to be little more than a highly unfortunate outcome of the peculiarities of European history. In individuals, the independent co-existence of incompatible knowledge systems is a sign of schizophrenia, and it is hard to conceive how this could be different for society at large. Even if a true integration[25] of spirituality with the presently dominant knowledge system of science will be hard to achieve, the least we should strive for is some form of active cooperation. What form this cooperation should take is again difficult to say. In all likelihood psychology will see for a long time the co-existence of several competing knowledge systems rooted in a wide gamut of ideas and methods, that perhaps could be mapped in a three-dimensional space indicating their relative stress on physiological, social and spiritual factors. In the long run I expect, however, that there will be an increasing awareness of the value of spiritual knowledge, and of the interdependence between psychological insight and spiritual practice. If this is true and if we will indeed see an increasingly widespread recognition that *yoga*, and spiritual practice in general, leads to valid and reliable psychological knowledge of a quality that cannot be obtained otherwise,

then we can foresee a time when *yoga* will be considered equally essential for the psychologist as mathematical proficiency for the physicist.

Within the field of psychology, but potentially elsewhere as well, science and spirituality are complementary quests for knowledge in need of each other. Science is by its very nature down-to-earth, progressive and self-critical, and without these three qualities, spirituality tends to become too otherworldly, it gets stifled in the encrustations of religion, or it floats off in some new-age vagueness. On the other hand, science also needs spirituality to complement itself. Till now science has occupied itself mainly with the objective, outer half of reality, but this outer half has no independent existence. Reality-as-we-know-it is a relationship: a relationship between what we see as ourselves and what we see as the world in which we live. To fully understand what happens in this relationship, we need to know both sides of it, the inside as well as the outside. If we concentrate too exclusively on the outside we lose out on the deeper meaning of life, on the treasures of the spirit, and if we concentrate too much inside we get an otherworldly spirituality that doesn't do justice to the love that sustains this beautiful creation. Only when we pay equal attention to both sides of the equation can we develop a knowledge and mastery that are fully in harmony with the marvel of the evolving manifestation. Only then may it finally be said of humanity that its tread shall 'justify the light on Nature's face' (Aurobindo, 1994, p. 344).

Acknowledgement

In this chapter I have tried to give a faithful impression of Sri Aurobindo's ideas on knowledge in a language that is understandable and relevant for those who are engaged with contemporary psychology. In this attempt I have tried to stick as closely as possible to my own experience, and to be explicit about my philosophical presumptions and predilections. I am aware that these different objectives are not fully compatible. The language of modern psychology is not really suitable to deal with the type of experiences on which Sri Aurobindo bases his ideas, and the limited nature of my own experience enables me to see and understand only a small corner of his work. Still, I hope the result will be intriguing enough for the reader to give a serious thought to the ideas expressed in this chapter and to turn for further clarification to Sri Aurobindo's own writings.

Endnotes

1 There are exceptions, but they are few and far between. For an overview see Walsh and Shapiro, 2006.

2 According to Sheldrake (2005, p. 38) a recent exhibition in the Science Museum in London presented the human mind as the flight-deck of an aeroplane, but without a pilot. An unexpected Buddhist influence?

3 In the part of *The Life Divine* on which much of this discussion is based, Sri Aurobindo does not explicitly state that the distinction he makes between

'knowledge by identity' and 'separative knowledge' is equivalent to the traditional distinction between *vidyā* and *avidyā*, but I think it is a safe assumption.

4 There is also a dynamic aspect to this type of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo doesn't mention it in this context, but logically the dynamic side of this type of knowledge should include skills, the 'know-how' to do things.

5 In contemporary psychology it is widely held that intuition is constructed subconsciously and only appears to pop-up ready-made. Sri Aurobindo calls this pseudo-intuition. Intuition is used here in the original sense of true knowledge that is not constructed, but that comes to us at least partially 'ready-made' from some inner or subtle source. Much of this article can be seen as an attempt to show that such direct knowledge actually exists and is worth cultivating systematically.

6 'At the same time' may not be taken too literally. See the subsection entitled 'Of balconies and birds'.

7 In a state of pure consciousness there is evidently no distinction between subject and object, but not everybody agrees that such states are possible (Steven Katz, 1978, pp. 62–63). Even Jung, who is for many an early hero of the transpersonal movement in psychology, seriously thought that a state without ego, and thus without a clear distinction between subject and object, would intrinsically be an unconscious state. This seems to betray a somewhat surprising lack of understanding of the Indian tradition. For a brilliant discussion of Jung's position vis-à-vis Eastern thought, see Coward (1985).

8 In one famous experiment a video-clip is shown of two teams of six players, one team dressed in white, the other in black, who pass two balls on to each other in what looks like informal volleyball training. The observers are asked to count how often a white player manages to pass on a ball to another white player without a black player intercepting it. In the middle of the clip an actor dressed up as a black gorilla enters the scene, stands still in the middle, waves his two hands at the audience, and then moves out from the other side. Even when one shows this video clip to large audiences, there is hardly ever someone who sees the gorilla. If at the end, one tells the audience to relax and watch the video once more without counting anything, just for the sake of seeing if there is anything special they missed during the first viewing, nobody misses the gorilla, and most people have a hard time believing it is the same movie (see Simons & Chabris, 1999).

9 For a refutal of one of Dennett's main arguments, see Cornelissen (2008).

10 The Sanskrit word *dharma* is difficult to translate. It denotes truth in the realm of agency. As such it is often translated as (moral, social) duty and even as religion, but especially the latter is not satisfactory, as *dharma* has a strong connotation of something that is part of one's essential nature and that as such goes beyond social conventions.

11 Inwardly, subjectively, there is an interesting vertical dimension to our awareness of different types of consciousness: we tend to visualise the heavens above and the dark, subconscious realms below. We will come back to this later.

12 Sri Aurobindo claims that it is actually possible to cultivate intuitive knowledge to such an extent that it can take over all ordinary mental functions and become one's normal way of knowing reality. We know from the diary Sri Aurobindo maintained during a few years of intense *yogic* practice, that he made this amazing

claim not on the basis of literary exegesis or philosophical speculation, but on the basis of meticulously carried out experiments, of which he maintained a detailed day-to-day record. The 'laboratory notes' in this *Record of Yoga* (2003) are full of examples of detailed knowledge even about trivial events in the outer, material world, that would be extremely difficult to explain as constructed on the basis of sense-impressions and memories alone. For an interesting study of yogic powers and parapsychology, see Braud (2008).

13 'Inevitable' is the highest 'grade' in Sri Aurobindo's appraisal of lines of poetry in terms of their level of inspiration.

14 This is significant as the *Vedas*, from where this simile hails, are extremely terse; they are like mathematical formulas of the spirit, and there is never a word too many. Each word covers a world of meanings.

15 Sri Aurobindo looks at the Darwinian evolution as gradual emancipation of consciousness. He holds that just as life has developed in matter, and mind has developed in embodied life, still higher forms of consciousness are bound to develop in embodied mind. Sri Aurobindo looks at *yoga* as a concentrated attempt in the individual to achieve in a short period what Nature itself is working out in her own speed on larger scale.

16 At the end of a passage where he describes several ways to silence the mind, Sri Aurobindo says, 'In a complete silence only is the Silence heard; in a pure peace only is its Being revealed. Therefore to us the name of That is the Silence and the Peace.'

17 The dimensionality of the 'inner' or subtle experience of consciousness is an intriguing phenomenon that one finds mentioned throughout spiritual literature, and that consistently returns in experience. In the 'inner' experience, one can actually centre one's consciousness at different vertical levels, and more or less deeply 'inside'. I will come back to this in the next section.

18 I'm not aware of hard statistical data on this issue, but both tradition and personal experience tell that 'enlightenment', which is closely related to one's capacity for knowledge by identity, tends to bring with it some degree of telepathic capacity, even though clairvoyants are certainly not always enlightened.

19 For more details see Sri Aurobindo's *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *The Life Divine*. A short summary of the system can be found in Cornelissen (2005) and a more detailed account in Dalal (2001).

20 *Cakras*, Sanskrit—centres of different types of consciousness arranged one above the other in the subtle body. Though the idea that different types of conscious activity take place at different locations in the body has been worked out in much more detail in the Indian tradition, traces of it occur even in the English language, for example, 'use your head' means 'think better'; 'open your heart' means 'feel more compassion'; 'follow your gut-feelings' means 'follow your basic life instincts'. In an interesting example, Matt Frei (2008) wrote for BBC News, '[I]f America votes with its heart, it will elect Obama. If it votes with its gut, it will go for McCain.'

21 I could have written 'in that state' but at the risk of being accused of occultism, I have chosen consciously for 'in that world' as the latter appears more accurate. In many contexts, 'state' and 'world' are interchangeable, but they do not have the same connotations. 'State' stresses that what one describes happens inside the mind of an individual and is dependent on its condition. 'World' stresses the complexity

and internal coherence of what one experiences, and it implies some kind of objective existence, though the latter can be apparent only (as in, 'a dream world'). I am inclined to think that what I describe here are indeed worlds, not just states. They seem to pre-exist independent of the human mind, though what one actually experiences is indeed dependent on one's inner condition. According to Sri Aurobindo this is equally true for all worlds, even for the ordinary physical world: all worlds come about in an interaction between *purusha* and *prakriti*, self and nature, conscious being as subject and the same conscious being as object. They differ from each other in the type of consciousness on the subject and on the object side.

22 *Vijñana* is here used in its older sense of the Gnostic link-plane between the upper and lower hemispheres, equivalent to the *Vedic mahas*. In later times the same word was used in the much-diluted sense of intellect. In both cases *vijñana* is the plane above the *manas*. In the *Vedic* sense which Sri Aurobindo uses, it is the plane entirely above the mind as a whole, in the later sense it is used for a plane above the sense-mind, but still within the mind in its more general sense.

23 Sri Aurobindo describes these higher planes of consciousness with an exemplary and, one must add, rather rare intellectual discipline and 'rectitude'. From his diaries and the autobiographical poetry he wrote during the same periods as his published writings, we know that he carefully avoided quoting the sometimes strong claims of classical Sanskrit texts if he had not on the one hand fully understood their implications, and on the other seen them supported by his own experience. This, together with the detailed studies he made of our ordinary human nature as seen from the higher planes of consciousness with an eye on its transformation, make his work so exceedingly interesting for Psychology.

24 With 'self' I mean here the eternal centre of one's consciousness, the *ātman*, or the *puruṣa* of the Indian tradition, not the western 'self-concept', which corresponds in the Indian tradition more closely with the *ahaṁkāra*, the constructed, socially determined egoic centre in the outer nature, with which the real self erroneously identifies.

25 It may be noted that integration is not the same as amalgamation. In amalgamation, the original substances lose their own qualities and get merged into a new, essentially amorphous substance. In integration, the differences of the various parts are carefully maintained and uplifted into a new, and more complex unity (like the various parts of a car, that find the fulfilment of their existence in their cooperation in the workings of the larger unit of which they are the constituents.) True integration is above all not constructed with the mind, but an offering, a taking up in the pre-existing higher oneness of the conscious existence of the Divine.

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17

The noetic process (*citta vīthi*): A Therāvāda Buddhist view

S. R. Bhatt

This chapter aims at analysing psychologically the cognitive process as it is presented in the Therāvāda Abhidhamma tradition which is the earliest tradition of Buddhism and which provides the foundation to all later Buddhist schools. Without sufficient knowledge of Abhidhamma philosophy one cannot properly understand the later developments in Buddhist thought. The inevitable significance of enlightening knowledge (*prajñā*) in a liberating philosophy like Buddhism need not be pointed out. However, it should be emphasized that the Buddhist theory of knowledge is only a corollary of the Buddhist theory of reality and the Buddhist theory of reality is consciously purported to be directed towards the realization of *nirvāṇa* (eternal bliss). In this chapter, an attempt will first be made to present the Buddhist approach to reality and thereafter the Buddhist account of the noetic process will be put forth.

Introduction

The varied and multi-faceted Indian philosophical thought is characterized by two broad philosophical tendencies which are antithetical in nature but both of which can be traced in germinal form to the *Upaniṣadic* thought. One tendency which can be termed as '*ātmavāda*' or 'substance-ontology' has been dominantly presented in the so-called 'Six systems' and Jainism, the culmination of which is found in the Advaita Vedānta. The other tendency which is popularly known as '*anātmavāda*' or 'no-substance ontology' finds its advocacy and manifestation in the Buddhist thought. The basic contention bifurcating the two tendencies is the view regarding the ontological status of permanence and change, both of which, though opposite in nature, are given to us in veridical experience, and therefore both claim the status of reality. The substance-ontology advocates the permanence aspect and tries to explain (or explain away) the phenomenon of change. The no-substance ontology, on the contrary, accepts the reality of change alone and explains (or explains away) the experience of permanence as a conceptual super-imposition.

Thus, the history of Indian philosophical thought could be approached in terms of the dialectic of these two divergent tendencies.

The substance-ontology revolves around the idea of permanence or abidance as the sole criterion of reality. Accordingly substance which alone is the substratum of all attributes and modes has the sole reality or the primary reality, and the attributes and modes have either an apparent existence or a derivative existence. According to Advaita Vedānta, substance, which is a unitary homogeneous pure consciousness, alone is real and all attributes and modes are phenomenal in the sense that they are *mithyā* (i.e., neither real nor unreal). The Sāṁkhya system and also the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṁsā systems, however, assign some reality to change also in so far as matter is regarded to be subject to mutation whether in the form of evolution from one mass of matter, or in the form of combination of different particles of matter and thereby producing a different or new complex. But the point to be noted is that even in these schools, which display a realistic tendency, the primacy of substance and its permanent essence are emphasized. It may be significant to point out that there has also been another tendency in the school of Jainism wherein the exclusiveness of substance ontology and no-substance ontology has been rejected and equal status is accorded to both permanence and change.

The no-substance ontology of Buddhism

Buddhist thought has centred on no-substance ontology. Gautama, the Buddha, who initiated Buddhist thought, was led to philosophizing by an intense longing for the eradication of suffering. He visualized that all suffering is due to '*tanhā*' (longing) and all longing is due to attachment to the false notion of permanence. He wanted to suggest a way out of the labyrinth of suffering and put forth impermanence or non-substantiality as the key to overcome suffering. The four noble truths, therefore, advocate the idea of impermanence and non-substantiality.

The entire reality which is generally understood in terms of matter and consciousness has been understood by the Buddha as a series of changing moments (*kṣaṇa*). The word 'moment' is only suggestive of the fact that all real or existent is time-embedded. All that exists exists in time. And, therefore, an existence series is identical with time series. The existence series could be physical or psychical or a conglomeration (*saṁghāta*) of the two. Every series in itself is also a conglomeration. A material entity is a physical conglomeration (*bhūta saṁghāta*) whereas a mental entity is a psychical conglomeration (*citta saṁghāta*). A living being is a psycho-physical conglomeration. And since the psychical conglomeration is of four types, a psycho-physical conglomeration is named as *pañcaskandha* consisting of four psychical and one physical conglomerations. The four psychical conglomerations are: *vedanā skandha*, *saṁskāra skandha*, *vijñāna skandha* and *saṁjñā skandha*. The purely physical conglomeration is *rūpa skandha*.

The existence series whether of a physical conglomeration or psychical conglomeration consists of distinct units of existence which are discreet but not

independent. They are rather interdependent in the sense that every succeeding unit in the series is causally dependent upon its preceding unit. In order to be real, every preceding unit in the series has to give rise to its succeeding unit. These two ideas are technically known as *pratītya samutpāda* (dependent origination) and *artha kriyā kāritva* (casual efficiency) which are complimentary to each other and which provide the corner stone to the entire Buddhist metaphysics. These two ideas constitute the essence of the four noble truths propounded by the Buddha.

The concept of existence series (*kṣaṇa santāna*) is pivotal to Buddhist metaphysics. It explains the reality of incessant change in terms of the causal and dependent origin of the succeeding from the preceding units in the series. The experience of permanence in the series is also explained on the basis of continuity and dependence. The real is always changing but the change is not at random and is causally regulated. In the case of a human being, the series is psycho-physical having a distinct identity of its own. But this poses the problem of memory, recollection and recognition in every distinct personal identity. Buddhist thought explains these problems in terms of *kṣaṇa santāna* (existence series). In every psycho-physical series which is unique and self-identical, the succeeding is given rise to by the preceding, and this conglomeration of a five-fold series which begins with the birth of the conglomeration in a particular form, continues till the death of that conglomeration in that form. From birth to death, in this series, there is a constant change and yet there is retention with the possibility of recollection and recognition, on the basis of which the past is retained in the present and handed over to the future. In death the total conglomeration does not cease to exist or does not come to an end, and gets retained so as to give rise to another conglomeration in some other form in the next birth. In this metamorphosis the psychical series is present only in the form of *saṁskāras* (latent impressions) sustained by *karmic* forces. It is the *karmic* forces which determine the nature and form of the next birth. They also determine the *pañcaskandha* (the five-fold conglomeration) which has to come into existence in the next birth. There is continuity not only within one particular birth, but also from one birth to another birth. Thus in Buddhist thought we find a remarkable explanation of the problems of personal identity, rebirth, and the experience of permanence etc., expressed in the phenomena of memory, recollection and recognition.

There are some interesting implications of the no-substance ontology advocated by the Buddha. The idea of impermanence of reality results in the denial of a permanent and immortal soul. However, this does not mean that there is no eschatology or soteriology in Buddhist thought. The Buddhist account of the destiny of the individual self is conditioned by the ideas of *anityatā* (impermanence), *pañcaskandha* (five-fold conglomeration) and *santāna* (existence series), and accordingly the destiny of the individual self is characterized as attainment of *nirvāṇa*.

Another implication is in the form of insistence on human autonomy and denial of any supra-human divine agency for helping the human being to attain *nirvāṇa*. The Buddha spearheaded the Śramaṇa tradition which emphasized

self-effort and noble conduct (*ārya-aṣṭāṅgika mārga*). In this scheme there is no role assigned to any divine or super-human agency. The Buddha always impressed upon his followers to have a critical attitude and an analytic bent of mind. He was opposed to blind faith and that is why he rejected all notions about transcendental entities. However, this does not mean that the Buddha was anti-spiritualist. He had an abiding faith in a moral and spiritual order. And that is why he was not a materialist like Cārvāka.

Noetic processes in Buddhism

In the background of the aforementioned ontological position we may now turn to the analysis of the noetic process based on *Aṭṭhaśālinī* of Buddhaghoṣa, a commentary on *Dhamma-samgini*. The noetic process is technically known as *citta-vīthi*. *Vīthi* means path or process and *citta* means consciousness. All knowledge takes place in and through consciousness.

The meaning of *Abhidhamma*[1]

The word '*abhidhamma*' is a compound of two words, '*abhi*' and '*dhamma*'. The prefix '*abhi*' means *ati* or *atiśaya,* meaning to 'excel'. It is called '*abhidhamma*' because it excels in exalted wisdom about *dhamma* (*dhammatireka-dhammavisesatthena*) (*Aṭṭhaśālinī*, p. 13). It is regarded as instruction in the ultimate nature of things (*abhidhammo nāma paramatthadesanā*) (*Aṭṭhaśālinī*, p. 338). Here *dhamma* is understood as *svabhāva* or *paramattha,* the ultimate reals.[2] This is because it enables us to penetrate the superficial to reach the very essence of reality. The ultimate aim of Abhidhamma is to point out the way (*mārga*) to *nibbāna* and it is regarded as the teaching of the advanced level meant for those who have already attained a high level of consciousness (*Aṭṭhaśālinī*, pp. 13, 304, 484, 486, 488). It is contended that Buddha, the Śākya-muni, was the first one to know the essence of things—*sammāsambuddho vā pathamataram abhidhammiko* (*Aṭṭhaśālinī*, p. 135). Buddha was not detracted by the blinding glitter of the outer surface of things and penetrated deeper to receive their illuminating glow from within, and was thus regarded as the enlightened one. But he did not confine this enlightenment to himself and disseminated it to those who were competent to receive it. Subsequently, it was passed on by an unbroken chain of teachers. Though the ultimate objective of the Buddha's teachings—Buddha *deśanā*—is to point out a way to *nirvāṇa*, the Abhidhamma literature presents a very subtle, deep and extensive analysis of the cognitive processes and mental states conducive to the realization of *nirvāṇa*. Of course, this does not mean that here we have a systematic and neatly formulated theory of epistemology, but from the account available in this literature such a theory can be culled out.

The Abhidhamma tradition puts an exclusive emphasis on immediate or direct experience rather than an abstract intellection or discursive reasoning. It insists that true (*samyak*) experience is attainable only in a *kuśala* (pure or undefiled)

citta. That is why the noetic process conducive to *samādhi* (meditation) leading to *nirvāṇa,* is put forth in a moral setting.

The *citta* can be either *kuśala* (pure) or *akuśala* (impure) or *avyākṛta* (neutral). When it is affected by emotional affections and ideational defilements it is *akuśala*. When it is purged of all these impurities it is known as *kuśala citta* (*Aṭṭhaśālinī*, p. 125). *Kuśala* stands for that which is faultless (*samyak*), efficient and skilful (*arthakriyākāri*), and which leads to satisfaction or bliss (*tuṣita*). Etymologically, *kuśala* means *ku*, that is, basal factors and *śala,* that is, to destroy. So *kuśala* means that which destroys the basal factors. There is another etymological meaning of the word *kuśala,* according to which *kuśa* means knowledge and *kuśala* is that which curtails, reduces and eradicates all that which is base,[3] and enables us to acquire that which is correct or faultless.

Kuśala citta is a purely objective consciousness which is free from all impurities. It alone is a foundation leading to *samādhi*. Only in a state of *samādhi, prajñā* arises which leads to *nirvāṇa*.

In the Abhidhamma tradition there is insistence on having true knowledge based on correct attitude (*samyag dṛṣṭi*) for the realization of *nirvāṇa*. This has been practiced by the Buddha himself in four stages which, based on Asanga (*Mahāyāna sūtrālaṅkāra* 11.3), are described as follows:

- *Abhimukha*, that is, preparedness to be face to face with reality and with the way and the goal.
- *Abhīkṣṇa*, that is, discriminating examination of various viewpoints about the reality, the way and the goal.
- *Abhibhava*, that is, controverting fallacious viewpoints of opponents.
- *Abhigati*, that is, understanding the correct viewpoint as shown by the Buddha.

According to Abhidhamma all empirical cognition is conditioned by *kāma* (volition) which can be described as sense-relatedness or intentionality. *Kāma* has two facets—one pertaining to the object and the other pertaining to the mental state. In every cognitive process there is an object which is intended to be cognized and there is an intention in which an object is intended to be cognized. On the basis of this analysis it can be concluded that every empirical cognitive enterprise is conditioned by an intentionality which is a triune unity of cognitive, affective and conative factors. This may also be characterized as subjectivity. In every empirical cognition there will be subjectivity which is necessarily lurking in the form of "presuppositions". This presupposition is psychical in nature and it is present in the form of *saṁskāra* in every cognizing consciousness.

Keeping the above stated central focus of the Buddhist approach to reality, the Abhidhamma literature presents a very subtle and penetrating understanding of human nature and human suffering. The entire human existence is explained under four heads, namely:

(a) *nāma* and *rūpa*
(b) *pañcaskandhas*

(c) *dvādaśa āyatanas* and
(d) *aṣṭādaśa dhātus*

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyse the concept of *nāma* which stands for the *citta* and the *cetasikas*. *Citta* is generally rendered in English as consciousness. Consciousness is defined as 'everything taken together that has the characteristic of cognizing is to be known as the aggregate of consciousness.'

In Abhidhamma the words *mano* and *vijñāna* are also used as synonyms of *citta* but one can draw a subtle distinction amongst these three in actual usage.

Analysis of the process of consciousness

Consciousness in itself is self-enveloped and dormant. It is known as '*vīthimukta',* and when consciousness gets activated it is known as *vīthicitta*. The process of consciousness is technically known as *citta-vīthi*. The cognitive process begins when the cognitive senses receive the reflex of objects—external or internal. The external objects are received through the five outer senses known as *pañca-dvāra,* and the internal objects are cognized through the mind known as *mano-dvāra*. For the functioning of each type of course of cognition, there is a distinct process and a specific object.

The cognitive process which apprehends external objects is further classified under ten stages. They are as follows:

1. *Bhavaṅga*: Passive state of mind
2. *Bhavaṅga-calana*: Vibrated passive state of mind
3. *Bhavaṅga-viccheda*: Breaking of passive state of mind
4. *Pañcadvārāvajjana*: Turning to impressions of object
5. *Indriya vijñāna*: Perception
6. *Sampaticchanna citta*: Recipient consciousness
7. *Santirana citta*: Investigating consciousness
8. *Votthāpana citta*: Determining consciousness
9. *Javana citta*: Actively involved consciousness
10. *Tadālambana citta*: Registering consciousness

- *Bhavaṅga*: It is a passive state of mind, going on smoothly on its own course, quite undisturbed, existing immediately prior to the appearance of any type of object. It is also called *atīta bhavaṅga*. It is pre-reflective consciousness.
- *Bhavaṅga-calana*: When an object enters in the range of a cognitive sense, it creates a simple vibration in the smooth flow of mind, just like the falling of a pebble on the calm surface of water in a tank.
- *Bhavaṅga-viccheda*: Immediately after *bhavaṅga-calana* the smooth flow of mind is arrested. It ceases to be a passive state and gets disturbed.
- *Pañcadvārāvajjana*: *Āvajjana* means alertness or awareness. The cognitive senses become alert to receive the impressions of an object.

- *Indriya vijñāna*: If the object is a visible one, the object causes a sensation in the eyes. The same is the case with the other cognitive senses.
- *Sampaticchanna citta*: Immediately after the eye consciousness, the mind attends to the object as something existing outside. It is simply the marking of an object and not determining its details. 'There is something' is cognized but 'what it is' is not known.
- *Santīrana citta*: It is attending to the object and determining its nature on the basis of past experience. It is a determining cognition on the basis of past recollection. But at this stage full determination does not take place.
- *Votthāpana citta*: It denotes the sense of determination. The comparison of the details enables the mind to determine it as such and such.
- *Javana citta*: It is an attitude of mind towards utilization or rejection of the object. In case the object thus determined is an agreeable one, the mind utilizes it and if it is otherwise, the mind rejects it. It lasts for seven consciousness-moments.
- *Tadālambana citta*: It literally means functioning on that object. It lasts for two consciousness-moments.

In this way seventeen consciousness-moments are involved in the cognition of an object. These seventeen moments complete the full course of cognition of an external object. It is to be noted that both matter and consciousness are momentary but endurance of matter is seventeen times more than that of consciousness. In other words, one matter-movement equals seventeen consciousness-movements. When an object comes in the range of a sense organ, the course of cognition begins. By the time consciousness undergoes changes seventeen times through different stages, the object remains in the same stage. At the end of seventeen consciousness-moments the full course of cognition is complete and the duration of the object is also over. The object ceases to exist giving rise to its effect. When the object is fully cognized it is called 'very distinct object'. It may be that the object does not meet with all the ten stages. It is possible that the object comes into existence but does not attract cognitive process at the outset. So there can be an abrupt beginning or an abrupt end. In such a situation the cognition process is not complete and the object is not fully or properly cognized. Thus the object can be clear (*vibhūta*) or obscure (*avibhūta*).

These ten stages of cognitive process arise in quick succession, being regulated by the principle of *pratītya samutpāda*. The preceding and succeeding stages are marked by similarity as they are caused by the same object.

Thus, the total process of cognizing consists of ten stages from *bhavaṅga* to *tadālambana*. The first three stages are preliminaries. They stand for mental preparedness for receiving the impressions. The remaining seven are concerning the awareness of the object and are known as *cittotpāda* (arising consciousness of an object). *Bhavaṅga* is comparable to deep sleep. It is a lazy state of mind. After the seventeenth moment there is *bhavaṅga pāta* (cessation of cognitive process or *vīthi-bhaṅga*).

Manodvāra vīthi

Manodvāra vīthi, internal objects like thoughts, feelings, sentiments etc., are cognized in a slightly different way as it involves the role of mind only.

The concept of *citta*

The concept of *citta* plays a very significant role in Buddhist epistemology. *Cinoti iti cittam*; on the basis of this etymology, *citta* can be understood as that which builds up its own continuity.[4] This means that *citta* is a complex of several factors or events which occur in succession. These successive events can be named as *caitta*. There is no separate entity called *citta* apart from the *caittas*. In fact, *citta* is a convenient and conventional term to denote a variety of psychic events in an organized unity. For all practical purposes *caittas* which are mental states alone, are real and *citta* is just a fiction (*prajñāpti sat*).

Manas

Another epistemic term employed by the Abhidhammic tradition is *manas*. *Manas* is both a cognitive sense and the receiver of the sense impressions. As a cognitive sense it functions at par with the other five senses. Whereas these five senses namely, the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin apprehend external objects, mind apprehends internal states. The other function of mind is to receive the sense stimuli and here it comprehends both the objects of its own field and also the objects of the fields of the outer senses. In its overall functioning, mind precedes and succeeds sense perception. It precedes in the form of attending to the sense stimuli and its succeeding is in the form of discrimination and selection of the sense stimuli. It is in this sense that we say, 'eyes don't see but mind sees it'. That is why the Buddhists use the word 'door' for the senses.

In the Abhidhammic tradition perception is described as of two types. One is sensuous and the other is non-sensuous. The sensuous perception is due to five cognitive senses, which have their respective fields of functioning and corresponding objects. Every cognitive sense has its own distinct jurisdiction and class of objects to be cognized. There is no over-stepping and intermingling in their jurisdiction. Nor can they usurp the functioning of the mind which is another factor involved in the process of cognition (*Majjhima Nikaya*, p. 295).

The non-sensuous perception is *yogic* perception. It is available only in heightened states of consciousness.

Conclusion

To sum up, the cognitive process is an interplay of the mind with the five senses. Each sense has its own mode of functioning, for example, 'eye' has the nature of seeing, its capacity is activated by consciousness along with the totality of causes

and conditions including the object, the eye consciousness and accessories like light etc. The object appears, the eyes see and the eye consciousness knows. The process gets completed in what is known as *manovijñāna dhātu* which consists in the grasping of the object of consciousness.

Before the onset of the cognitive process, *citta* is in a latent or natural state of existence. It is known as *vīthimukta citta* or *pakkatimano*. It is also known as *nibbuta citta*. *Bhavaṅga* is such a state of *citta*. The cognitive process starts with *bhavaṅga* and ends in *bhavaṅga* (*nibbuta citta*). In its functioning, as stated earlier, *citta* is conditioned by emotional afflictions and ideational defilements but when it is freed from all these then it becomes *bodhi citta* which is *prakṛti prabhāsvara citta* (naturally luminous *citta*).

Endnotes

1 (a) The Abhidhamma tradition is a continuation of the Sutta tradition dealing with varied philosophical, moral, psychological and religious issues. Traditionally, the vast Abhidhammic literature has been put forth under seven heads, namely:

- *Puggal Paññatti*
- *Dhātu Kathā*
- *Dhamma Sangaṇi*
- *Vibhanga*
- *Paṭṭhāna Pakarana*
- *Yamaka*
- *Kathāvatthu*

Buddhaghoṣa wrote commentaries on all these. Upon these there are sub-commentaries and sub-sub commentaries and other expository literature like *nissayas* and *ganthis*.

(b) *Prajñā amalā sānucarā abhidharma*, pure wisdom along with its accompaniments, is *abhidhamma*. *Abhidammakośa* I.2

2 *Dhamma iti svabhāva* (*dharma=svabhāva*)

3 *Kuśita's chalita gata apakrānta iti kuśatah. Prajñā vā kuśa iva tikṣṇeti kuśalaḥ; tam tanti adadata iti kuśalaḥ*

4 *Cittanti ārammaṇam cinteti ti cittam vijānāti ti attho*. *Aṭṭhaśālinī*, p.161

Classical texts quoted

Abhidammakośa

Aṭṭhaśālinī

Mahāyāna sūtrālaṅkāra

Majjhima Nikaya

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Section 4

Affect, motivation and creativity

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Introduction

The study of psychological phenomena becomes most intriguing when we examine its dynamism and affective content. In fact these features constitute the major part of the vast spectrum of experiences notable in human functioning such as love, hatred, anger, hostility, violence, cooperation, achievement, power, peace and negotiation. Indeed they colour our outlook toward self and others, and determine our investments for the choice of one over the other domain of life, and the pursuance of related activities for achieving the ends we desire. In psychological metatheory, therefore, motivation is deeply implicated in the formulations of purposive and goal-directed behaviour. It brings in the element of volition and free will/self-determination, and distinguishes human behaviour from the behaviour of machines. The most challenging problem of motivation comes from the domain of creativity in which people undertake extraordinary feats and demonstrate originality in their constructions. The present section deals with some of the issues pertaining to affect, motivation and creativity.

There are well-documented variations between, as well as within individuals in terms of their level of performance, commitment and persistence. People in various walks of life (for example, sports, work and creative engagement) evince a remarkable variation in these characteristics. Understanding this complexity is not only necessary to furnish a plausible causal account of behaviour at a theoretical level, but also to derive the practical means needed for changing and shaping behaviour in desirable directions. However, the observed changes in the variability, frequency, and quality of behaviour or effort within different situations are impressive and their explanation defies any simplistic account.

The extant psychological vocabulary and practices are replete with a number of related constructs such as interest, aspiration, intention, volition, value, and attribution, which in various ways seem to direct and guide human action. These terms have been posited to describe and explain the observed diversity in human endeavours. People invest personal and social resources for achieving different goals, and undertaking feats demanding higher levels of competence and skill.

The implicit assumption in most theoretical accounts in psychology is that human beings possess a form of energy which gets manifested as action and behaviour. The thwarting of any movement towards chosen goals results in frustration and conflict, which in turn threatens our well-being. With the technological revolution taking place in the IT sector, leisure activities and work behaviours are

being redesigned. Globalization is changing the nature of work, and people are required to perform in newer and more complex ways, which often leads to role stress. The world of work is undergoing rapid transformation. In today's world, the experiences of stress and burn-out are being frequently reported, and the lack of home–work balance is becoming a major issue.

Motivation deals with the springs of action which make behaviour possible. For quite some time, the psychological theories of motivation consisted of mechanical models employing a system in which behaviour was linked with a set of potentially causative or explanatory factors encompassing neural, physiological, social, cognitive, behavioural and situational ones, in combination or alone. These underlying factors were posited as aspects of conscious as well as unconscious levels of processing. Depending upon theoretical preference, a stable dispositional, a dynamic situational, or an interaction model was suggested to account for the observed variability in behaviour.

The analysis of various motivational properties of behaviour essentially relates to the issues of emergence, sustenance, and termination of action and behaviour. To this end, psychologists have posited a number of factors inside and outside the person (for example, instincts, needs, personality factors, drives, motives, goals, incentives, rewards, punishment). There are numerous theories which attempt to provide convincing accounts of behavioural diversity. The common theoretical strategy has been to secure an apparently legitimate perspective based on a combination of physiological, social and cognitive factors.

Being closely connected to the shaping of work-involvement, educational performance, and social interactions in various formal and informal settings (for example, family, peer interaction, market, and community), much interest has been displayed in interventions designed to influence people's behaviour. In recent years psychologists have worked extensively on the analysis of intrinsic motivation, and self-related motivational processes. However, the analysis is predominantly framed within a positivist framework.

Contrary to the Western perspective, the Indian view posits a spiritual self and raises the questions of consciousness and enlarged identities. It refers to four major life goals—*dharma* (upholding the social order), *artha* (economic activity), *kāma* (pursuit of pleasure) and *mokṣa* (quest for liberation). The duality between the mundane and spiritual is overcome by the assumption of a transcendental identity, which encompasses the totality of existence. The Indian approach, being more inclusive, allows and facilitates movement toward higher levels of development, without any contradiction. In this framework *dharma* has been assigned a key role. It is asserted that all actions must be in accordance with *dharma*. In matters of conflict *dharma* is the deciding factor. Relevant to this is the fact that a clear distinction is made between the desired (*preyas*) and the desirable (*śreyas*). One must take up actions that are desirable and not those that are merely desired.

The above view is shared in different ways, and human suffering is explained on the basis of clinging to various objects, perceptions and experiences. The egocentric or egoistic tendencies ('I-ness' and *mamatva*) are the roots of all anxieties,

conflicts and tensions. In the Indian view, what one needs to develop is *samatā* or equanimity. The systems of *rāja yoga*, *karma yoga, jñāna yoga,* and *bhakti yoga* have been developed to suit different people. The notion of the person as actor is decried, and ego is treated as a mere instrument of action. *Ahaṁkāra* (egoism) is considered as the most critical problem to be tackled.

In the field of emotions, the mainstream approach is that of the naturalists, who usually base their views on Darwinian beliefs about the role of emotions in human survival. Naturalists hold that emotions are biologically grounded and essentially uniform across the human species. In contrast, constructionists argue that emotions are culture-specific. Some emotions which are central in one culture, simply do not seem to exist in other cultures. Further, the same emotion is often differently defined and expressed, varying from one culture to another. In Indian thought, the term *rasa* denotes emotion. *Rasa* is translated into English variously as emotion, meta-emotion, sentiment and aesthetic mood.

Similarly, in the field of creativity, the mainstream psychological research focuses mainly on the creative individual and therefore explains the phenomenon of creativity in terms of traits and abilities. The alternative perspective explains the phenomenon of creativity in terms of processes or systems which the creative individual is a part of, thereby providing a context within which both, the creative process and the creative person, are embedded. Here, creativity comes to be understood as a process embedded in a network of other processes external to the creative individual. Theses processes include the social, political and cultural factors that have a great influence on the genesis of a creative person as well as on the construction of 'creativity' at a particular point in time. In the Indian view, creativity is a disciplined intellectual–spiritual exercise embedded in the social context and heightened by moral, social and spiritual values.

In 'Psychology of emotions: Some cultural perspectives', Girishwar Misra begins with a summary of findings on the study of emotions in mainstream psychology. Whereas early studies on emotions searched for universals, the author notes that studies across cultures do indicate differences in the experience of emotions, in their recognition, and variations in their intensity. Misra builds on this and concludes that emotions are culturally shaped. The Indian contribution of *rasa* theory is then outlined. Misra is of the view that the concept of *rasa* as meta-emotion and *bhāva* as emotion, present a new dimension of aesthetic creativity that goes beyond the established views on emotion and widens their scope. The Indian idea of *rasa* draws our attention to a refined subjective mental state, and in relation to aesthetic experience, the person as dancer/poet and spectator/audience gets transported to an altered state, which may not be in congruence with mundane experience. Misra holds that in the Indian view, emotion can be a transcendental cognition, and *rasa* involves experiencing the universal self.

Sunil D. Gaur begins his chapter, 'Why am I here? Implications of self and identity for conceptualizing motivation', with an overview of theories on motivation in mainstream psychology. The author notes that contemporary views of motivation are derived from Western culture and are based on assumptions which

often do not hold true in non-Western cultures, for example, the predominantly individualistic and egoistic notion of self. Gaur points out that Indian views on motivation are informed by an interdependent worldview, wherein the self is viewed in relation to physical, social and spiritual aspects of existence. The Indian paradigm is holistic and organic, and expands the boundaries of the individualistic theories of motivation prevailing in the discipline.

Anand C. Paranjpe examines 'The principles and practice of karma yoga in the writings and life of B. G. Tilak'. He begins by clarifying that *karma yoga* is a means for liberation of the self with the primary emphasis on action as opposed to emotion and cognition, which are the focus in *bhakti* and *jñāna yoga*, and goes on to present the conceptual foundations of *karma yoga* as found in the Indian tradition. Paranjpe next offers a modern psychological interpretation of *karma yoga*. A life history of Tilak is then outlined following Erik Erikson's approach in the study of the biography of the exceptional person. But instead of using Erikson's eight stages, Paranjpe uses the philosophy propounded by Tilak to help understand how it shaped Tilak's own life.

'From dejection to action: A narrative analysis of the transformation of Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira' is Kavita Sharma's analysis of the changes that took place in the consciousness of Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira, after being counselled by Kṛṣṇa. The first step was the elimination of egoistic activity that has its foundation in an egoistic consciousness. This means that work has to be done without any desire for the outcome. Working desirelessly thus entails absolute equality of mind and heart to all results, reactions, or happenings. Therefore, in Sharma's interpretation, the first step is *karma yoga*, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the insistence is on action. The second step is *jñāna yoga*, the self-realization and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world, and here the insistence is on knowledge. The third and last step, in Sharma's view, is that of *bhakti yoga* as devotion, the seeking of the supreme self as the divine Being. Works still continues in true knowledge, but now are done by a worker stationed in the Divine.

In 'Cultural construction of creativity: Dualism and beyond', Minati Panda points out that Western views have promoted a notion of creativity as an individualistic non-conforming innovation wherein the lone genius stands apart from others and in isolation from social forces. Panda notes that this approach has biased Indian as well as cross-cultural comparative studies of creativity projecting a view of non-Western 'collective' cultures as less creative. The author then examines traditional Indian texts and thought on the creative processes, which reveals a perspective that goes beyond the dualistic opposition between the individual and society, and between originality and conformity. In the Indian view, creativity is a disciplined intellectual exercise embedded in the social context and heightened by moral and social values. Panda concludes that creativity is not an individualistic utilitarian act; it is a disciplined and value-based mental act situated in the cultural context, in which the individual and the social are fused together.

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Psychology of emotions: Some cultural perspectives

Girishwar Misra

After a long association with cognition, psychology is now deeply and intensely engaged with affect and emotion. Emotionality may not be liked, but being emotionally competent is often considered a virtue. A moment's reflection makes it clear that our thoughts, actions and interactions are almost always coloured by the emotions which accompany them. Indeed, emotions are ubiquitous in our lives. Interestingly enough while 'being emotional' is intrinsic to human nature, at the same time humans have the capacity to reflect on and regulate their emotions. This implies that emotions vary not only across individuals and groups but also within the same person. As Ekman (2003, p. 213) has remarked, 'we each experience the same emotions, but we all experience them differently.' This chapter tries to examine how emotion experiences are shaped by culture. The overarching goal of this chapter is to explicate and appraise the current state of understanding in this area, and to bring out the indigenous contributions of Indian thought to the centre-stage.

The lived reality of emotions

Emotions such as love, hatred, surprise, excitement, joy, envy and fear are frequently experienced in day-to-day affairs. In fact they supply a lot of information about us and help in regulating our actions and interactions with fellow beings. In common parlance, they are held as triggers of actions as well as goals or end points towards which actions are directed. Emotions are certainly involved in determining the ill-being and well-being of individuals and society. They are inescapably involved in almost all kinds and shades of human activities (for example, violence, helping, altruism, cooperation and competition). In lay theories, therefore, emotions are treated as the real and immediate springs of action. They are used as well as misused in everyday affairs. They are sites of manipulation and subject to arousal, suppression, projection, substitution and elaboration by people. Emotions matter for everybody as they energize us and in a significant sense configure our identities. Our sense of being is unimaginable in the absence of emotional scripts.

Notwithstanding the recognition of emotion in human life by the lay person, the discipline of psychology, particularly the so-called mainstream, has not given emotion the importance it deserved. Perhaps its unpredictability, subjectivity and fluidity have rendered it into a less-scientific theme. Of course, psychologists of other persuasions engaged in the study of personality and motivation-related issues, and understanding the problems of depression, anxiety and stress and pursuing clinical and particularly psychodynamic work did look into the emotional lives of people. In all these endeavours, emotion's image has largely been portrayed as negative, pathological and irrational. In general, it dealt with the darker side of human life. It was considered opposed to reason, logic and rationality. As a result, the meaning of 'emotion' became fuzzy and problematic. It is only during the last one decade or so that the study of positive emotions such as happiness, hope, optimism, and processes such as flourishing, have started gaining attention by the positive psychology movement. One reason for this increased attention is that studies of negative emotions such as anger, depression and anxiety were capturing only a limited part of the affective lives of people and ignored the potentials of growth and positive dispositions. Considering the salience of emotions in our lives, it is not surprising to note a revival of interest in the study of emotions in many sister disciplines such as sociology (Stets, 2003; Williams, 2001), anthropology (Hinton, 1999), social psychology (Forgas & Smith, 2003), philosophy (Roberts, 2003; Wollheim, 1999), political studies (Marcus, 2003), marketing (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2003) and neuroscience (Panksepp, 1998; Rolls, 1999).

The changing contours of the emotional world

Literary evidence, ethnographic records and other kinds of evidence suggests that the ideas about emotion and emotional lives of people vary across time and space, and between and within cultures (see Averill & Saundarrajan, 2006; Ray, 2001). Looking at the large-scale changes in social mobility, transportation, social institutions and ideologies, one is bound to think that the future of our emotional lives would be different from the past and the present. Today emotions are often driven by the market forces and are attached to physical objects (Mestrovic, 1997). Contemporary humans, being self-absorbed, seem to have more feelings and pay more attention to them, but seem to have fewer feelings for others and the surroundings, and pay less attention to them. Contrarily, in the traditions of oral cultures emotions happen to be immediate, sensual, inclusive and interactive. People have the capacity to resonate their bodies with other bodies and with the imbedding physical and social contexts. With technological inventions people started disengaging themselves from interactions. Thus the virtual experience of the electronic era has brought back the sensory qualities of direct experience but without the interactive part. It makes emotions detached from action. The unemotional life may not be worth living. The present scenario of emotional life is problematic.

Thus the reality that one has to face is that whether one wants it or not, our emotional lives are bound to change. These changes, however, also imply that

emotions are not purely biological or genetically predetermined. Instead they can be shaped in certain directions. We may opt for an emotionally creative life by paying attention to our feelings, cultivating certain habits of thought; practicing to experience certain mental states and encouraging desired emotional positioning of self toward own self and others. The Indian view has addressed this transformative potential of emotions in significant ways. Against this backdrop, this chapter makes an effort to bring out some of the perspectives on emotions in mainstream psychology and explores the Indian perspectives on emotion.

In the Indian context human action is expressive, symbolic, or semiotic. The apparent is not all. Instead, it is a manifestation of something greater which is unmanifest. It is an indicator of our existence and not the existence itself. Understanding indigenous epistemology, aesthetic criteria and sensibility, therefore, offer an alternative perspective on human action. Our emotions not only operate at different levels of being but may help (or hinder) our movement across different levels of consciousness. Contrary to this, modern psychology has treated emotions as predominantly physiological. It has been argued that emotions have an evolutionary history and the expressed commonality across species is used to lend support to the biological primacy of emotional processes and their predetermined form.

Studies across cultures do indicate differences in the experience of emotions, in their recognition and differences in intensity. Building on these it is argued that emotions are culturally shaped. After presenting an overview of the developments in the study of emotions in psychology, the Indian contribution of the *rasa* theory is outlined. The concept of *rasa* as meta-emotion and *bhāva* as emotion, present a new dimension of aesthetic creativity that goes beyond the received view of emotion and widens its scope. Viewing emotional experience in terms of a matrix of meanings, identities and relationships, emotion is treated in a non-physicalist and non-reductionist manner. It is more like a situated performance and narratives with potential for creative transformation and social engagement. The Indian idea of *rasa* draws our attention to a refined subjective mental state. The person as dancer/poet and spectator/audience get transported to an experienced state, which may not be in congruence with the mundane experience. Emotion is transcendental cognition, and *rasa* involves experiencing the universal self. It is especially instructive in the contemporary period. However, before we explore these aspects it would be pertinent to see how emotions have been treated in psychology.

Psychological thoughts on emotions: The Euro-American tradition

The disciplinary journey of psychology to understand emotions is more than a century old. Today it has reached a point where a unitary notion of emotion as a physiological thing has collapsed and it is difficult to offer a precise definition. In an impressive discussion Damasio (1994) has noted that emotions are innate, preorganized, and relatively inflexible responses to certain combinations of stimuli. Although they provide a quick and efficient set of responses, the next step is the feeling of emotion in connection to the object that excited it. The awareness of

connections between the object and certain emotions serves several adaptive functions. Also, significant variations across individuals are found in temperament, emotion regulation, intensity of emotional experience, ability to regulate emotions, or to control, modify and manage aspects of emotional reactivity and expressivity. In fact there is growing convergence on the view that emotions encompass the processes that vary in duration from briefly experienced feelings resulting from conscious or unconscious appraisal, to more enduring affective styles.

Emotions perform motivational, communicative and regulatory functions within and between individuals. In a normative sense they inform about intended or likely behaviours and underlying mental states of others during interpersonal interactions. It is often held that while there is a biologically based substrate of adaptive emotional functioning, learning, experience, and the active socialization of emotions significantly influence the same and may lead to healthy or pathological consequences. Let us examine in some detail the developments in mainstream psychology pertaining to the study of emotions.

The interest of psychologists in emotional phenomena is often traced to Darwin (1872/1965). He argued for phylogenetic and ontogenetic continuity of major expressive patterns of emotions. It was followed by the work of William James (1890), who observed that '*the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same is the emotion*' (Vol. 2, p. 449). Following this view, emotion came to represent the feelings related to physiological changes. People 'have emotions' like other dispositions. Emotions are localized in the body. The psycho-physiological symbolism present in this view has dominated most of the theories of emotions. This view was rooted in Descartes' thinking, and demanded a mechanical view. For instance, Freud considered emotions as safety valves that let off their energy. The physicalist view helped to assume that the basic emotions are universal. Thus emotions came to be known as passive things that happen to people. The next step was the development of a cognitive view in which *appraisal* and *labelling* became central to the conceptualization of emotion (Schachter & Singer, 1962).

The physiological or bodily base of emotion and presumed evolutionary continuities led to a view that there are some primary or basic emotions, which are pre-packaged and pre-wired. As Lazarus (1991) has noted, while emotions are genetically determined, they are altered by social and biological variables. They express personal meanings and experience. The nature and experience of emotions, however, do not take place in a vacuum. Instead, they are organized through and embedded in cultural contexts. As we shall see in the following section, the role of culture vis-a-vis emotions has been diversely explored contributing to varied hypotheses and findings.

Understanding the culture-emotion interface

The relationship between culture and emotion has been approached from many perspectives leading to not only different answers to the same questions but to

different questions too. Mesquita (2001) has identified three paradigms which are followed by the researchers in such endeavours. The first paradigm tries to understand *universal* emotions. It asks the question—is emotion *X* present or absent in culture A? The underlying assumption is that emotions come as packages consisting of invariant patterns of emotion specific responses. The second paradigm involves a *componential* approach which has questioned the idea of emotion as a unitary whole. The focus is on understanding invariant configurations of responses. Accordingly, the aspect of emotion that was most and least susceptible to variation was examined. The degree of similarities and differences across cultures was delineated. The third paradigm is the *cultural* one. It proposes cultural differences in emotions and tries to understand how the tendency of people in a culture to respond in certain emotional ways relates to cultural ideas and practices. Let us examine these paradigms in some detail.

The quest for basic emotions

The search for basic emotions (Ekman, 1992; Izard, 1994) is premised on the assumption that there are certain universal emotions that involve unique patterns of responses for each of the universal basic emotions. The evidence in support of this position comes largely from facial recognition studies. They indicated an above chance level recognition of facial expressions from different cultures. The studies suggest certain universal modes of communication of emotion or certain emotion components. However, differences in the rates of recognition of facial expressions, the fact that emotion words associated with facial expressions mean different things in different languages (Wierzbicka, 1986), ambiguity about the question, whether emotions are spontaneously inferred by people across the world (Russell & Fernandez-Dols, 1997), have rendered this approach as problematic.

The study of *vocal expressions* of emotions has revealed that in all cultures the recognition of vocal expression was the best for the same emotion. Cultural differences have also been indicated (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). The basic emotion approach has difficulty on account of too much emphasis on intra-individual states, rather than processes in context. The focus has been on potential rather than prevalence. The dichotomous approach has many problems. Emotions share many things and differ in many respects. Universality and cultural specificity are treated as mutually exclusive.

Cultural variations in the components of emotions

This perspective views emotions as multi-componential phenomena (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 1997). It maintains that an emotion comprises of an antecedent event, appraisal, physiological change, change in action-readiness, change in cognitive readiness, change in cognitive functioning, and change in regulator process. In most of the cases emotions are thought to involve all these components. Thus an emotionally charged event starts the emotion process, yet

each component has its particular determinant. The components are thought to change somewhat independently of each other. Of course, mutual influences are also recognized. This approach has led to the study of emotion experiences with a focus on appraisal of emotion antecedents and action-readiness. The appraisals can be conscious or unconscious. This approach has shifted the focus on cross-cultural variability of the different components independently. The work of Scherer and his associates (Scherer, Wallbolt, & Summerfield, 1986) does not show very strong cultural effects. On the whole the evidence supports similarities between appraisal and emotion experience. Similar emotions are characterized by a similar core action-readiness; modes explain a significant part of the variance in emotions. However, emotions in different languages tend to have a culture-specific action-readiness profile. The approach is limited by self-report data and offers a compartmentalized study of emotions. It does not provide any direction to study the cultural differences in emotions.

Culture-specific patterns of emotions

Emotions appear to be a core aspect of the behaviour of conscious beings. They are prominently present in social settings and regulate the same by connecting individuals to their social world within a cultural context. As Kitayama and Markus (1994) propose, the cultural frame or meaning system makes different things to occasion the diverse experiences as providing feelings of sadness or joy. The cultural frames inform what an emotion is and when and why an emotion is experienced. The studies of display rules were proposed to uncover the culture specific proscriptions (who can show which emotion to whom and when). Studies have indicated that there are differences in display rules. The studies of emotion lexicon do not provide evidence for cultural diversity in emotions (see Lutz, 1988; Lynch, 1990; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Russell, 1991). Japanese *amae* (Doi, 1973), Illongot's *liget* (Rosaldo, 1980) and Indian *lajja* (Menon, & Shweder, 1994) suggest cultural specificity of emotion experience.

It seems that the awareness of having emotional experiences takes place in the socio-cultural context in which a person is situated. Thus while appraisal as such is a general process common to all cultures, the particular form of appraisal and the processes utilized in it are brought into action by certain implicit theories or notions. In a recent analysis of emotion Averill, Chon and Hahn (2001) have proposed an interesting model of emotion. They suggest that the origins of behaviour lie in a person's biological and social heritage. The sum of a person's biological endowment is his or her genotype. Similarly one may speak of social systems of behaviour or institutionalized patterns of response that help assure the survival of a society. The biological systems are coded in the gene pool of the species. The social systems are encoded in the symbols, artefacts, and customs of society or 'cultgenes' (Lumsden & Wilson, 1983). The sum of a person's cultgenes, acquired during socialization, is his or her sociotype. The genotypes and sociotype, together with experiences unique to the individual, combine to form his or her *emotional*

traits. These are long-enduring predispositions to respond in an emotional way; for example, with fear, anger, or sadness. They are different from emotional states. There are some *emotional syndromes* which are theoretical constructs involving cultural beliefs and implicit theories about the nature of emotions. These include *existential beliefs and social rules*. These theories are evaluative. They not only describe what is, but also provide what should be. The manifestation of emotional syndromes in thought, behaviour and feelings, and the relevant rules and beliefs need to be internalized. These internalized beliefs and rules constitute emotional schemes and scripts.

Averill et al. (2001) assert that culture can influence the emotional life of individuals in two main ways: first, through social system of behaviour contributing to a person's sociotype and their influence on emotional traits; and second, through the implicit theories (beliefs and rules) that help constitute emotional syndromes and regulate behaviour. The sociological (Parkinson, 1996; Roberts, 2003; Thoits, 1989; Williams, 2001) and anthropological (Lutz, 1988) works, recent studies of emotional vocabulary and emotional recognition (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003; Mesquita, & Frijda, 1992; Shaver, Murdaya, & Fraley, 2001) and social constructionist accounts of emotion (Harre, 1986; Averil et al., 200l) suggest that emotional life in terms of categories and processes may take diverse forms in different cultures. The challenge is to develop a genuinely multidisciplinary perspective capable of analysing and theorizing in fresh ways the mutually constituted nature of culture and individual experience (Moore & Mathews, 2001).

Thus we need to learn about subjective, behavioural and embodied aspects of individual experience in their cultural context. Thus an individual's experiences form the basis for shared cultural beliefs and various cultural forms. They in turn shape the perceptions and understandings of individual cultural members. The challenge is to evolve a theoretical and methodological perspective capable of analysing and theorizing in fresh ways the mutually constituted nature of culture and individual experience. Williams (2001, p. 132) has perhaps rightly captured the contemporary scene of emotional understanding by saying '*emotion is a complex, multidimensional, multifaceted human compound, including irreducible biological and cultural components, which arise or emerge in various socio-relational contexts. As a thinking, moving, feeling 'complex'—rather than a static, unidimensional 'thing'—emotion is embodied through and through; the animating principle of sociality and selfhood, conceived in intersubjective, intercorporeal, communicative terms*.' With this in view we may examine the indigenous Indian perspective on emotion experience.

Emotions in the Indian thought

Historically, sage Bharata first conceived the *rasa* theory in the context of theatre which was subsequently extended to all poetry. His treatise entitled *Nāṭyaśāstra* was composed approximately in the third century AD. Of course, reference to *rasa* does exist in *Vedic* hymns in which *rasa* is considered as a stream of consciousness, as illumination and as offering oneself to the universal self. In the subsequent

developments in Indian thought, *rasa* has become a core and all-pervasive concept cutting across various domains including literary criticism, dance and visual arts. *Rasa* is abstract and perhaps it is on account of this that it helps in universalizing the experience. *Rasa* is translated into English variously as emotion/meta-emotion/sentiment/mood. The details of the theory have been discussed by many authors in different contexts (for example, Gnoli, 1956; Jain, 1994; Kapur, 1998; Lynch, 1990; Masson & Patwardhan, 1970; Misra, 2004; Pandey, 1959; Paranjpe, 1998; Shweder & Haidt, 2000; Sinha, 1961).

The theory illuminates human emotions by contextualizing them in the reception of creative work (for example, poetry, drama and other acts). Literally *rasa* is the relishable quality inherent in the emotive content of some work of art. In the course of time the concept of *rasa*, which was originally an aesthetic concept referring to the act of relishing or gustation (*rasana*), has evolved and has been interpreted in many ways. Aesthetic experience is the apprehension of the created work as delight. The objects and situational contexts define the feelings present in drama or poetry. Emotion becomes manifested by the object to which the emotion is directed, other exciting conditions, the overt expressions, and other ancillary feelings. A different sense of *rasa* is the relishable experience occasioned by the work in the reader or spectator. Bharata's chief concern was the analysis of the emotion-experience which the spectator (*prekṣaka*) undergoes, while witnessing a dramatic performance on the stage or reading poetry. For Bharata, *nāṭya* or drama is so comprehensive that nothing is excluded from it:

> *Na tat jñānam na tat śilpam na sa vidyā na sa kalā,*
> *Nāsau yogo na tat karma nāṭye'smin na dṛśyate.*
>
> There is no such knowledge, no such craft, no such education, no such art, no such learning, and no such activity, which cannot be seen in drama.
>
> —*Nāṭyaśāstra* (I. 116)

It may be noted that Bharata assigned specific emotional values to musical notes (*svaras*) and melodic patterns (*jātis/rāgas*), when they are used in stage presentation. Thus musical sounds too can be suggestive of *rasa*. In Indian dance the elaborate language of hand gestures, glances, and body movements is designed to enact the mood of the song. The gestures and pure dance movements (foot work, poses) are also involved. The gestures express feelings and various mental states. The *rasas* are expressed in paintings and sculptures too. *Rasa* has also been conceptualized as a blissful state of mind, comparable to the enjoyment of *Brahman*.

Typology of emotions

The *rasa* theory implies that there are a number of specific emotions, each with its distinct tone or flavour, and not an anonymous aesthetic emotion. The theory of *rasa* was posed as the fundamental on which Indian poetics rests. But Indian poetics draws on and in turn influences all other thought-disciplines, so it has a trans-disciplinary character. In particular, it has direct relevance to contemporary

psychology of emotions. Bharata lists forty-nine *bhāvas* out of which eight are primary or durable states (*sthāyi bhāvas*), with corresponding *rasas* or aesthetic moods. In addition there are thirty-three transitory states. The basic emotions can be developed into distinct aesthetic moods. Other transient emotions come and go according to their affinity with the durable emotions. The classification proposed by Bharata lists eight *rasas—śṛṅgāra* (love or delight), *hāsa* (amusement, laughter), *karuṇa* (sorrow), *raudra* (anger), *vīra* (perseverance or heroism), *bhayānaka* (fear), *bībhatsa* (disgust), *adbhuta* (wonder, astonishment). There are corresponding *bhāvas*, namely, *rati*, *hāsya*, *śoka*, *krodha*, *utsāha*, *bhaya*, *jugupsā* and *vismaya*. The commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra* by Abhinavagupta adds a ninth *rasa*—the *śānta* or the mood of total freedom in which neither happiness nor unhappiness occur. Its *bhāva* is *śāma*. Since then, these nine *rasas* have been accepted as the fundamental units. Certain additions like *vātsalya* (love for child) and *bhakti* (love for God) was made by later writers and these also have some acceptance. For practical purposes then, only the nine *rasas* are considered as the established consensus.

It may be worthwhile to note that 'love for child' and 'love for God' are subsumed under 'erotic mood' or the 'mood of love' namely *śṛṅgāra* by those who do not accept their separate existence. Despite this nine fold division, there is an argument that fundamentally there is only one *rasa*. This is important for the contemporary discussions since it posits that there is in fact only one emotion which then manifests itself into many colours assuming distinct identities. Which one of this is the most basic *rasa*, is a matter of debate. Abhinavagupta takes *śānta*, the ninth one which is implicit, as the basic one. But there have been given at least three other choices—*karuṇa*, *adbhuta* and *śṛṅgāra*. The last, *śṛṅgāra* is the erotic mood, and has been given a strong theoretical support by Bhoj. In his vision, *śṛṅgāra* is the basic force responsible for the creation of the universe. In contrast, the famous Sanskrit poet Bhāvabhuti has stated that *karuṇa* (sorrow) is the only *rasa* and appears in various forms.

The concepts of *bhāva* and *rasa*

The Indian perspective treats emotions in a narrative framework composed of causes, consequences and concomitants of an illusive meta-emotion—a *sui generis* form of consciousness—called *rasa*. The experience of *rasa* is rooted in the concept of *bhāva*. *Bhāva* is that which brings about a condition or which gets established through what happens (*kaver antargataṃ bhāvaṃ bhāvayan bhāva ucyate*). *Bhū* means to be and *bhāva* means that which brings about being. Thus *bhāva* stands for Being or existence, and also the ultimate meaning (*bhavatīti bhāvaḥ; bhāvayantīti bhāvāḥ*). Thus *bhāva* refers to existence as well as the mental state. As Bharata has stated, the dance, poetry or drama works as a catalyst and activates the *bhāva* (emotion) that is already present.

In everyday life we experience a number of *bhāvas* on different occasions. The traces of these experiences stay with us. The *bhāvas* are present in us in the form of *vasanas*. The *sthāyibhāvas* are dispositions or *cittavṛttis*. When we recognize

these *bhāvas* by means of enlightened bliss in the self, the very same *bhāvas* are designated as *rasa*. In this way the experience of *rasa* operates in a sequence of transformations in the person. To begin with, a *bhāva* becomes manifest due to someone or something and is to some extent determined by the circumstances. Once such a condition of being appears, the person begins to overtly behave in a given way (*anubhāva*). There may be a dominant *bhāva* in a number of ancillary emotions (*sañcāribhāvas*). Each mental state is correlated with certain forms of physical demeanour and behaviour (*abhinaya*). The *rasa* experience involves the above-mentioned *bhāvas* but is not equal to the sum of them. Instead it has its own quality. The various components are necessary and in totality sufficient cause of *rasa* experience.

When the entire sequence of events is enacted in a text or on a stage, the reader or spectator relishes (*āsvādati*) or experiences a *rasa*. Abhinavagupta, one of the chief exponents of *rasa* theory, locates *rasa* in the viewer's or *sāmājika's cittavṛttis*. The *cittavṛttis* or *sthāyibhāvas* refer to a person's inherent predispositions. They are manifest when they come in contact with a pertinent experience. The same is generalized in a literary representation. In those moments the viewer's separate identity evaporates and consciousness merges in the universal experience of *rasa*. The *rasa* exists only in this apprehension, and once manifest produces *alaukika ānanda* or bliss.

In Vedānta, joy is the affective core of consciousness or existence. The idea of *Saccidānanda* implies that the ultimate reality is inseparable oneness of existence (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and joy (*ānanda*). However, at the mundane level of existence pleasure and pain are both present. In fact pain and suffering often dominate our lives. But its meaning varies. Both pain and pleasure are relative. It is human smallness and egoistic feeling that leads us to dislike suffering. When our consciousness enlarges, our capacity for joy and suffering also increases. Sri Aurobindo has proposed that the goal should not be to escape in an absolute of existence, consciousness and bliss but to call them right down in the manifestation. He talks of a biological evolution, which will move from an embodied mind, *manas*, to an embodied super mind, *vijñāna*, through transformation of our nature (see Dalal, 2001). Thus the Indian approach to affect and emotion is signally instructive from the perspective of well-being. It is emphasized that attaining well-being requires that we must understand our true nature or self.

The cognition involved in the *rasa* experience is possible because it forms the object of higher consciousness assuming the witness attitude or *sākṣibhāva*. Differing from other ordinary forms of cognition this experience of bliss or *ānanda* is an enrichment of one's sensibility. At that moment we are endowed with the ability to have the experience of suffering etc. of another person as our own. The *citta* becomes self-aware. It represents comprehension of the general nature of a *bhāva*, such as grief, from particular instances independent of specific objects and events. It then becomes part of the self. When empathy takes place the self takes the form of *ānanda* and the viewer is totally immersed in it. This state is *rasa*. It is consciousness modified by the awareness. The *rasasvāda* or relish of an emotional

state of being occurs when we are educated in our feeling (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*). The experience requires that one should be in tune with others (*sahṛdayatā*). Such a person shows communion with the aesthetic experience. A *sahṛdaya* requires a keen and intense recollection and contemplation when there is an aesthetic confrontation.

Thus we find that emotional experience involves a sequence of interrelated events that form a story or a narrative. The *rasa* experience (*rasānubhāva*) starts at the sensory level and moves to the level of imagination, level of *bhāva*, level of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, to a super-conscious level that goes beyond the material world. We come in contact with objects of pleasure through sense organs. The objects lead to our imageries. We complete the experience through imagination. At this level the person changes. He is in a different world of his own creation. Thus a *sahṛdaya* viewer identifies with the hero who is acting in the play. He views things from the perspective of the hero and responds accordingly. This is the level of *bhāva*. The intense *bhāva* experience results in the loss of individuality.

The making of *rasa*

According to Bharata, emotions are expressed through the conjunction of their causes and symptoms, and other ancillary feelings that accompany the emotions. It is through the *saṁyoga* (conjunction or union) of *bhāvas* that *rasa* becomes manifest (*vibhāvānubhāva-sañcāri-saṁyogād rasa-niṣpattiḥ*). The four necessary conditions for the manifestation of an emotion include causes (*vibhāva*), symptoms (*anubhāva*), and other ancillary feelings (*sañcāribhāva*) and their conjunction (*saṁyoga*). Here the word cause means those factors which generate or excite the emotions. In drama they become the cause of the knowledge of emotion. This includes all the background information including words, physical gestures, and involuntary psychic symptoms (e.g. sweating, trembling etc.), settings, events, and action tendencies that might make manifest some state of the world and one's relationship to it. Some of them are primary causes, resting on which the emotions are born (*ālambana vibhāva*). Others are exciting causes (*uddīpana vibhāva*). They reinforce the basic emotion tone. The behavioural expressions of emotions are called *anubhāvas*. They make the feeling apprehensible. Thus, for instance, grief is born out of bereavement due to the death of a dear one, loss of property, experiencing the sorrow of near and dear ones. These are the causes. It is exhibited by shedding tears, weeping, a sinking of limbs, long and heavy breathing, becoming immobilized etc. These are expressions or symptoms. They express the mental state and are under different degrees of control. The more directly related expressions are called *sāttvikabhāvas*.

Finally, there are some other feelings which normally accompany and are called ancillary feelings. They are known as *vyabhicāri bhāvas*. For instance in love, infatuation, eagerness, pride, gladness are also seen. These are ancillary and transient in nature. They stabilize the principal emotions. They prolong and sustain the relevant mood for some time. Thus emotions are caused by objects, manifested

by expressions and nurtured by the ancillary emotions. A listing of the various components of *bhāvas* is given in Appendix 1.

It may be observed that the theory does not indicate that these factors are separately capable of creating *rasa*. For Bharata, *rasa* is an organic unity of the four components. They do not stand in any fixed relationship with one another. The poetic genius harmoniously unites them in such a manner that a given *rasa* is experienced or relished. It should also be remembered that the four constituents are not natural products. They are neither real nor unreal but have an independent existence in their own world.

The analysis of the locus of *rasa* experience and type of knowledge has been interpreted differently. Lollata Bhatta sees *rasa* located in *anukārya*. Also, through *aropa* or imposition in *anukartā*, the actor. The nature of knowledge is both *laukika* and *alaukika*. Sankuk finds *rasa* in *anukārya*—but its relish in the *sāmājika* is by *anumiti* or inference. So, in *sāmājika* as well. It is a kind of *vilakṣaṇa jñāna*. Bhattanayak locates *rasa* in the *sāmājika*. The nature of knowledge is *ātmasākṣātkārarūpa*. Abhinavagupta, the undisputed champion of *rasa* theory, locates *rasa* in *sāmājika's cittavṛttis*. The knowledge is of *ātmabodha* kind. According to this view *cittavṛttis* or the *sthāyibhāvas* are inherent predispositions. They become manifest when they come in contact with pertinent experience, which becomes generalized, in a literary representation. The viewer's separate personality weakens and his consciousness merges in the universal experience and he experiences *rasa*. The *rasa* exists only in this apprehension, and once manifest produces *alaukika ānanda*. Though it exists only in the *āsvādana* or relish, it may be regarded as something to be cognized as it forms the object of super physical consciousness assuming the *sākṣibhāva* and as such differs from perception and other ordinary forms of cognition.

Thus it is clear that the stable and transient, both kinds of *bhāvas*, are articulated in terms of causes and expressions. Some of the mental states like sleep, intoxication, are physical conditions and others may be caused by physical factors. They, however, refer to the mental states that they give rise to. In order to appreciate how specific emotions are treated in the Indian tradition, the following section describes some of the prominent *rasas*.

***Śṛṅgāra* (love or delight):** Its *sthāyibhāva* is *rati*. According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* it involves intense delight, which arises from the attainment of the object desired. Other authors have considered it as desire characterized by a feeling of pleasure for objects agreeable to the mind. It is also called attachment (*anurāga*) or love (*prema*). It is reciprocally felt by a young couple for each other when desirous of union. Some others expand it to include friendship (*sneha*), reverence (*bhakti*), and affection (*vātsalya*) as varieties of *rati*. *Rati* is colouring of mind with joy and inclines it towards the enjoyment of pleasure. *Śṛṅgāra* is of two types, that is, union or enjoyment (*saṁbhoga*) and separation or privation (*vipralambha*). Its *sthāyibhāva* is *rati* (love or delight).

In the context of *śṛṅgāra*, union does not mean coexistence at the same place and separation does not indicate existence in different places. Union and

separation are conceived as two mental modes. They are in the nature of consciousness. It may be noted that union and privation cannot be divorced from each other. Apprehension of separation and expectation of union are always there. The pain of separation may be blended with the joy of union. Therefore it is possible to relish the union and separation both, which heighten the charm of each other (see Sinha, 1961). This *rasa* is compared with whatever is pure, holy and bright in the world. *Rati*, however, is not the transitory kind of lust, but the permanent disposition of love, which continues till it culminates in a completely joyful experience. Thus a favourable man and a loving young woman are the basic determinant cause (*ālambana vibhāva*) of *śṛṅgāra*. The moon, sandal paste, the spring season, pleasure gardens, the humming of bees etc. are the excitant causes (*uddīpana vibhāva*). Looking at the face of the beloved person, hearing of his or her qualities, contraction of the eyebrows, sidelong glances etc., are the ensuant cause (*anubhāva*). All transitory emotions and states are accessory (*vyabhicāri bhāva*).

***Hāsa* (amusement/comic):** This emotion is characterized by the blooming of the mind because it frees the mind from depression and relaxes it. It may be self-centred or other-centred. Its exciting causes (*bibhāvas*) include fun, foolishness, mimicry of other's actions, obtrusiveness, ugly appearance and odd dress, strange conduct and disguise. Its *sthāyibhāva* is *hāsa* (humour). Its *anubhāvas* include blooming and contraction of the eyes, redness of the face, perspiration and throbbing of the nose, the cheeks and lips. Bharata talks about six types of laughter: (1) *Smita*: in which the cheeks brighten up a little, the glances of eyes become graceful, and the teeth are not visible. (2) *Hasita*: in which the face and the eyes brighten up and the teeth are slightly visible. (3) *Vihasita*: in this the eyes contract the cheeks dimple, the voice becomes sweet and the face becomes red. (4) *Upahasita*: in this the nose is expanded, the eyes squint and the head and the shoulders are bent. (5) *Apahasita*: in this the eyes are filled with tears, and the head and the shoulders swing upwards on inappropriate occasions. (6) *Atihasita*: in it the eyes are expanded and suffused with tears, a loud cry is set up, and the sides are held with hands.

The accessory states (*vyabhicāri bhāvas*) include indolence, apprehension, shyness, sleeping, dreaming, envy etc. The organic expressions (*sāttvika bhāvas*) include contraction and movement of the eyes, perspiration, trembling, change of colour and shedding of tears.

***Karuṇa* (sorrow)** It involves excess of sorrow on account of bereavement or death of near or dear ones. It involves affliction of all mind, motor and sense organs. It has a paralyzing effect. Its *sthāyibhāva* is *śoka* (grief). Its *vibhāvas* include separation from dear ones or their death, loss of wealth, captivity, misfortune, loss of cherished objects, distress, sickness and poverty. In broad terms they encompass deprivation of cherished objects, bereavement of beloved persons or calamity. Its *anubhāvas* are many. They include repentance, change of voice, inactivity, fainting, dryness of mouth, loss of memory, trembling, sobbing, dejection, misery, anxiety, perplexity etc. The *vyabhicāri bhāvas* include self-abasement, agitation, terror,

deathlike condition, immobility, weeping, and loss of voice. The expressions include shivering due to feeling cold, dryness of mouth and weeping with tears.

***Raudra* (anger):** It is an emotion of fierceness aroused by hostile objects. It is considered as blazing and inflaming of the mind due to contempt, persecution and other such misconduct of the enemy. In it people are possessed by intense heat of the mind which results in hatred and desire to do harm. It is thus roused by hostile objects and opposition. It is different from revenge which is a transitory emotion that is not expressed in immediate action. Its excitatory causes include insult, abuse, false allegations, threat, acts of hostility disobeying orders, ridicule, mischief, disparagement etc. Its *sthāyibhāva* is *krodha* (anger). Anger is expressed by frowning, grinding of teeth, biting of lips, clenching of fists, thumping them, beating, throwing on the ground, oppression, seizing and cutting, perspiration, trembling, upturned eyes or fierce look. The expression of anger varies depending upon the person whether he or she is an enemy, friend, superior, beloved or subordinate. Its *vyabhicāri bhāvas* include right knowledge, determination, energy, excitement, revenge, instability, fierceness, pride, trembling, stammering, arrogance, intoxication and cruelty. Jealousy, recollection and patience have also been mentioned.

***Bhayānaka* (fear):** It is defined as extreme restlessness and bewilderment or instability of the mind evoked by the power of dreadful objects leading to apprehension of great evil or danger. Its *sthāyibhāva* is *bhaya* (fear or terror). Its excitatory causes, *vibhāvas*, include perception of ferocious beasts, darkness of the night, sounds of animals, offending the preceptor or authority, etc. Its accessory states include inactivity, perspiration, choking voice, trembling, apprehension, dejection, excitement, restlessness, perplexity, terror and death-like condition. The organic expression of fear includes trembling of hands and feet, shaking of the whole body, palpitation of the heart, perspiration, terror, inactivity, dryness of mouth, change of colour, loss of voice, running away, loud cry and search for shelter. These expressions further reinforce the emotion of fear.

***Bībhatsa* (disgust):** It is related to the shrinking of the mind evoked by the perception of loathsome objects (for example, blood, vomiting, wounds). It involves hatred excited by such perceptions. Its *sthāyibhāva* is *jugupsā* (disgust). Thus the sight of loathsome objects or hearing the description of such things causes disgust. It works as *vibhāva*. The expressions of disgust include shrinking of the body, spiting, narrowing of the mouth and the eyes, covering the nose, bending down the head, hurried movement, palpitation of the heart etc. Its *vyabhicāri bhāva* include anxiety, insanity, despair, intoxication, fear, agitation, sickness, aversion, fainting, anger, sleep, delusion and deathlike condition.

***Adbhuta* (wonder):** It is expansion of the mind at the sight of objects which transcend the boundaries of experience. It is unfolding of the mind produced by

the sight of extraordinary or strange objects. Disguise, acts of magic, superhuman feats, learning and skills acts as its *vibhāva*. Its *sthāyibhāva* is *vismaya* (amusement or astonishment).The occurrence of the unusual, unfamiliar, sublime, supernatural and extraordinary excite the emotion of wonder. The expansion of eyes, knitting of the eyebrows, shaking of the head, applause, tremor, choking of voice, and perspiration constitute its *anubhāva*. The accessory states include excitement, quickness, joy, instability of mind, inactivity, fainting and perspiration.

***Vīra* (perseverance or heroism):** It refers to quick action of mind or zeal involving firm endeavour. It works as a mental mode of superiority based on recollection of another's prowess and charity. Its *sthāyibhāva* is *utsāha* (energy). Its *vibhāva* includes absence of dejection, power, patience, heroism, renunciation, absence of wonder, right knowledge, influence, glory, modesty, and power of good counsel. Its *anubhāva* includes patience, charity, skilful diplomacy, valour, gravity, heroism, influence and rebukes. Its accessory states include patience, ascertainment of duty, pride, fierceness, excitement, revenge, recollection, exhilaration, joy and eagerness.

It may also be noted that these emotions also relate to each other in a positive or negative fashion. Thus love, comic, rage and heroic go together. Similarly wonder, rage and heroic go together. The pairs of grief-fear, wonder-quietude, and fear-disgust are compatible. Other combinations seem to be dissonant. In the indigenous literature the emotion of love is central. It is concordant with heroic, wonder, comic and rage. Perhaps this is the reason why it is called the chief *rasa—rasa rājā*. There is another relationship consisting of rage. On the one hand, it is related positively to love, heroic and comic, and on the other it relates to three negative emotions—grief, disgust and fear, which are positively related to each other. Heroic is positively related to rage, love and wonder. Comic is positively related to rage and love. Love is positively related to wonder and wonder is positively related to quietude.

It is also noted that some emotions are discordant and don't go together. Thus disgust, grief, fear and quietude do not go with love. Similarly comic does not go with grief and fear. Grief is discordant with rage, erotic, comic and heroic. The heroic is discordant with fear, disgust, grief and quietude. Fear is discordant with rage, wonder, quietude, heroism and comic. Disgust does not go with wonder, erotic and heroic. Wonder does not go with disgust, fear and grief. Quietude does not go with fear, disgust, grief, love and heroism.

Emotion of *bhakti*

The emotion of *bhakti* or devotion presents an important development in *rasa* theory. The term *bhakti* is derived from the root *bhaj* which means service of the Lord. It reflects passion or love for the infinite. It is pursued in many forms including the image of God as child, master, friend or lover. But it is non-selfish, humble, and leads to sublime joy (*ānanda*). *Bhakti rasa* presents the case of divinization of emotion. *Vallabha Vedānta* considers it a separate emotion with god as object. It

is not the desire (*icchā*), attachment (*rati*), or ordinary affection (*sneha*) or volition (*prayatna*). Instead it is a permanent emotion of extraordinary sublime ecstasy for God. The underlying assumption is that man is part of Brahman. The visible and manifest plurality is derived from Him. *Bhakti* is often taken as a mental mode. By the practice of listening to the merits of *bhāgavata*, the mind melts and flows towards the supreme Lord. Enjoyment lies in being enjoyed. It is in the nature of intense bliss. The devotion to God occurs in diverse forms, including prayer, meditation, love, being devoid of desire for other objects, and worship of God. Sage Nārada defines it as supreme love for god. It is single-minded devotion. It can be experienced but cannot be described as it is transcendental. It gets manifested in love for God's creatures. It is in the nature of tranquillity and supreme bliss. It is considered as the fruit of all spiritual disciplines. Psychologically it may be characterized as the concrete religious/spiritual consciousness with specific elements of cognition, feeling and conation. Directing emotions toward the divine has significant implications for well-being and personal growth.

The experience of *bhakti rasa* is excited by the image of God, being in the company of *bhaktas* or in the presence of other devotees etc., which work as determinant causes (*ālambhana vibhāva*). The image is its object while devotees are its abode. God, in such forms as that of Krishna, is considered as the repository of all excellences. His qualities constitute his essence but when meditated upon as different from Him, they become the excitant causes. On the other hand, when they as essence are the object of meditation, they work as basic determinant (*vibhāva*). Its *anubhāva* include various organic manifestations including dancing, rolling on the ground, singing, shouting, deep breathing, laughing loudly etc. They are both voluntary and involuntary. It is argued that mind affected by the emotion of *bhakti* agitates and that this results in various expressions such as trembling, perspiration, shedding tears, singing, yawning etc. The innocent love for God works as *sthāyibhāva*. The transitory emotions and states emerge out of and again merge in the basic emotion and develop into *bhakti rasa*. On the whole *bhakti* is a different kind of *rasa*. As Madhusudan Saraswati says:

> *Bhagavān paramānanda-svarupaḥ svayam eva hi*
> *Manogatas tadākāra-rasatām eti puṣkalām*
>
> God, who is the nature of supreme bliss, himself enters into a devotee's mind, is experienced by him, becomes a permanent emotional disposition, and then is transformed into the rasa. —*Bhakti Rasayan*, I-10

In a classic description of *bhakti* the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* mentions nine aspects of devotion, that is listening (*śravaṇa*), chanting his names (*kīrtana*), recollection (*smaraṇa*), service (*pādasevana*), worship (*arcanā*), eulogy of him by hymns (*vandanā*), servitude (*dāsya*), friendship (*sākhya*) and self-dedication (*ātmanivedana*). Taken together these steps create an occasion for complete self-transformation. *Nārada Bhakti Sūtra* describes 11 kinds of devotion involving attachment to the qualities and greatness of god (*guṇamāhātmya*), his beauty (*rūpa*), worship (*pūja*), recollection (*smaraṇa*), servitude (*dāsya*), friendship (*sākhya*), wifehood (*kānta*), parenthood (*vātsalya*),

self-dedication (*ātma nivedanam*), absorption in him (*tanmayatā*), and separation from him (*paramaviraha*). Rupa Gosvami lists the following features of *bhakti*. It destroys afflictions, offers well-being and belittles the importance of liberation. It is difficult to attain. It attracts God and subjects him to the devotee. A devotee must direct all emotions and passions toward him. When all actions are done for God then they do not bind. Taking refuge in God (*prapatti*) is an essential ingredient of devotion. This involves surrendering the ego to reach greater heights in life.

It may be noted that devotion is a form of love and the key to love is intimate relationship, attachment and affiliation. In this case love is directed to God. The role of love in survival is well documented. It involves empathy and compassion. It also involves self-revelation or disclosure. Affirmation of value and meaning in all humanity for all life, understanding, communication, celebration, empowerment, communion and forgiveness are at the core of love.

In the Indian tradition, self (*ātman*), when united with an appropriate self-object becomes the locus of bliss (*ānanda*). Collins (1991) has drawn attention to the fact that in Indian aesthetics appropriate audience for a performance is called *sahṛdaya*, a person whose heart is one with the aesthetic work or performance, and where the essence of the work is said to be taken in as *rasa* (flavour) by the audience. Similarly the idea of sharing occurs in *bhakti* where the worshippers of the same god are encouraged to be one self through the god, and to reject all distinctions which seem to divide them. As Collins (1991, p. 174) remarks 'satisfaction results from the discovery and maintaining of self objects that mirror the self back to itself, either by extending its sphere of influence or by removing obstacles to its self revelation.'

The system of *bhakti* is considered as a path of emancipation. It is marked by an intense desire to go beyond self-centeredness. It involves identification of the individual self with the cosmic self. Two modes, that is, *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* are distinguished. The object of intense love is central. An intense longing is crucial for this. In this tradition *bhakti* is of the nature of pure emotion. In the *nirguṇa* tradition it is the self-realization through knowledge that matters. As Śaṅkara terms it, it is an investigation of one's own being (*svasvarūpānusandhāna*). Being *nirguṇa* the ultimate reality is indescribable. It is monistic with the provision of identification of *ātman* and *paramātman*. It is certainly a difficult path to self-realization.

In *Śrīmadbhāgavata* Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that there are four kinds of worshippers—distressed (*ārta*), the seeker of knowledge (*jijñāsu*), devotion of selfish (*arthārthī*) and wise (*jñānī*). The *saguṇa* form of devotion has led to many divine forms. There is the realization that God is both, very much within and outside the being of the devotee. *Jñāna* and *bhakti* are complementary. One needs to have a feeling of oneness with the divinity and establish a bond of love with his whole creation.

Love can have positive or negative consequences depending on its direction. But love always involves dispossession, sharing and ultimately annihilation of ego, and losing one's identity (*tadīyatā*). It does not involve any fear and is a subject of direct experience and perception. It is attained through single-minded supreme devotion (*parā bhakti*). Restraint of sense organs and concentration of mind allows

absorption in God and makes the devotee free. *Bhāgavata* also identifies two main forms of *bhakti, viz.—saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*. The former is subdivided into *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika* in which purity, energy and inertia dominate. All of them make a distinction between devotee, God and devotion. *Bhakti,* which is unconditional and spontaneous, is an integral experience and is characterized by service to God and transcends the three *guṇas*. Such a devotee sees God in himself and in all creatures, sees them in God and in himself, and sees the divinity of his self. He loses his identity and does not feel any distinction between himself and others and dedicates all his actions to God.

sarvabhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavadbhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavatyātmanyeṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

—*Bhāgavata*, xi, 2, 45

In a subsequent analysis, the Gosvamies articulate the path along which *bhakti* grows. According to them the beginning is with faith (*śraddhā*) in God. Then one goes for the company of saints (*sādhusaṅga*), acts of devotion (*bhajana kīrtana*), purging of impurities (*anarthanivṛtti*), worship without distraction (*niṣṭhā*), desire for worship (*ruci*), natural attachment (*āsakti*), nascent love (*bhāva*), ardent love (*prema*), *parā bhakti*, affection (*sneha*), sulks (*māna*) , intimacy (*praṇaya*), passionate attachment (*rāga*), transcendent attachment (*anurāga*), transcendent love (*bhāva*), and supreme holy love (*mahābhāva*). On attaining primary devotion a devotee becomes fulfilled (*siddha*), immortal (*amṛta*) and contented (*tṛpta*). The supreme love for God is infinite, absolute and complete in itself.

Conclusion

Human emotions are complex but meaning generating experiences. They are embedded in our lived experiences and have the creative potential to shape the same. The study of emotion in psychology in its received form is ill prepared to the situated and discursive stance of emotion that real life offers. The physical metaphors do not match this complexity and under represent it. As Averill (1990) noted, emotions are the products of culture and constitute one of the chief ways of cultural distinctiveness. It is more realistic to the modes of our emotional being to locate emotions in the social space and in the happenings in the lives of the people. The narrative form of emotion experience is emerging as a major departure from the received view of emotions (see Sarbin, 1989). It is in the course of happenings and their narrative articulation that emotions are born. It is said that the first poet of Sanskrit Vālmīki wrote the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* after witnessing the death of a bird, when grief took the shape of poetry (*śokaḥ ślokatvam āgataḥ*). The Indian approach to emotion as developed in the *rasa* theory clearly demonstrates the narrative form of emotion. As such, *rasa* theory cuts across many domains such as Yoga, Āyurveda, Advaita and Tantra.

Thus, emotion is a whole story. It is a unitary experience of self-transformation in which *rasa* is nothing but the union of three script-like or narrative components.

It is the simultaneous experience of all the components or perhaps more accurately the unitary experience of the whole package deal. The *rasa* experience or *rasānubhāva* starts at sensory level and moves to the level of imagination, the level of *bhāva*, the level of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, and to a super-conscious level that goes beyond the material world. We come in contact with objects of pleasure through our sense organs. The objects are the medium of the *rasa* experience. The objects lead to our imageries. We complete the experience through imagination. At this level the person changes. He or she is in a different world of his own creation. Thus a *sahṛdaya* viewer identifies with the hero who is acting in the play. He views things from the perspective of the hero and responds accordingly. This is the level of *bhāva*. The intense *bhāva* experience results in the loss of individuality. He is free from the limitations of time and space. He generalizes. This however is not the end of the journey. Abhinavagupta says that the climax is the experience of bliss, pure bliss. It is the experience of the self. It is *mahārasa*. During this stage the *sthāyibhāva* goes to the unconscious level. The experience of bliss characterizes the *rasa*. It reminds the *Upaniṣadic* statement *raso vai saḥ*. It's the experience of the *ātman*.

The Indian theory of *rasa* also posits a schema in which *rasa* is brought into existence through a joint activity of several elements or processes namely *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, and *sañcāribhāva*. This suggests that there are prototypes of specific emotions, which are part of the cultural meaning system. Recently, Misra (2004) empirically examined the antecedents of emotion experiences. He noted that the emotion experience in the Indian context has a remarkable cultural continuity. The specific emotions do share a mode that has considerable degree of consensus. Also, there are multiple pathways through which these emotions are experienced. We notice that collective as well as individual processes both shape the emotions. The antecedents indicate that emotional episodes involve motivational, communicative, and regulatory processes operating within and/or between individuals. It was noted that while some of these processes apply or are potentially applicable more generally, others vary considerably across individuals. From the protocols one can sense the existence of certain normative aspects which perhaps provide information about intended or likely behaviours and underlying the diverse mental states of others. It seems fair to argue that intra psychologically, the emotions perform organizing and motivating functions to facilitate adaptive goal directed behaviour. People will strive for rich emotional experiences that contribute to self-growth. This is why it is often said that unemotional life will not be worth living.

In this context it may be noted that the connection of self and emotion is very deep in Indian thought. Interestingly enough the term *bhāva* is used to denote both, being or self, and mental state. The root *bhū* means to be and *bhāva* means that which brings about Being. The *bhāvas* emerging or emanating from an interaction with persons and events constitute our experience. Experience is reflected in the self in forms of *vṛttis* (movements or actions) through the fourfold cognitive mechanism of *manas*, *buddhi*, *citta*, and *antaḥkaraṇa*. The *saṁskāras*, the traces of experiences, shape our selfhood, which both determines and is further

shaped by the way they engage with *bhāvas* (or *rasas*). In this way a continuous tension between emotion experience and self occurs. This analysis is frequently applied to the Indian aesthetic experience. It is held that *bhāva* becomes manifest in someone and/or due to someone or a thing and are to some extent determined by the circumstances of the event. Once such a state of being occurs, the person begins to behave in the given ways (*anubhāva*). There may be a dominant *bhāva* in the midst of a number of ancillary emotions (*sañcāribhāva*). This complex mental condition is correlated with certain forms of physical demeanour and behaviour in life (*abhinaya*). The *bhāva* produces certain physical effects. When all these co-occur, they evoke the *sthāyibhāva*. In life the hearer or spectator of the *sthāyibhāva*, given the empathy, experiences the concomitant *rasa* through the attachment of his or her mind to the *sthāyibhāva*. When this complex sequence of events occurs, then one experiences *rasa*.

Until recently, mainstream psychology has been preoccupied with treating the human psyche as a natural structure or entity. In this analysis the person with socio-cultural identity was missing. Also, the relationship between individual and society was treated as mechanical and the individual attained primacy over sociality in most of the accounts of social behaviour. Rooted in a machine metaphor the academic practices were engaged in sustaining the psychological enterprise for a long time. In this framework psychology was chiefly directed towards the scientific study of 'others'. The Indian perspective is unique in recognizing the social roots of being emotional and subjecting this to personal creative endeavour for welfare and emancipation. For a *bhakta*, emotion does not bind or impoverishe. Instead it is used creatively to empower self and others. This potential of emotional creativity is yet to be fully examined and nurtured. It is important not only for the alleviation of present day suffering but also for ensuring a sustainable future.

The complex relationship between emotion and culture is often revealed in the lived experiences of active goal directed persons. The constructivist approaches give greater emphasis on cultural diversity and tend to imply that each culture constructs its own unique psychology. The emphasis on local cultural content presents people either as passively absorbing or reflexively resisting such cultural content. How active and creative people meet the challenges of thinking, feeling, remembering etc. is not taken into account. We need methods to understand the mutually constituted nature of culture and individual experience. We need to forge a cooperative multidisciplinary approach. The individual experience and its relationship with culture needs to be studied from a perspective that maintains that instead of being entirely culturally constructed, individual psychology is also partially explicable in terms of universal patterns of human biological development as well as similar behavioural and psychological adaptations that groups make to common problems.

Appendix: List of *bhāvas*

Sthāyibhāva (emotion): *Sthāyibhāvas* are considered as enduring, persisting dominant and intense emotional dispositions. They are *sthāyin* or permanent in the sense that they cannot be suppressed or obscured by other emotional dispositions. Also, it is pointed out that a *sthāyibhāva* is produced by many factors. The list of *sthāyibhāvas* includes *rati* (love or delight), *hāsa* (humour), *śoka* (sorrow), *krodha* (anger), *bhaya* (fear or terror), *utsāha* (energy or *heroism), jugupsā* (disgust), *vismaya* (amusement or astonishment), and *śama* (serenity or calm). It may be worthwhile to point out that a given *sthāyibhāva*, if it contributes to another emotion, it becomes subsidiary. Thus when anger contributes to heroism and heroism contributes to fear they act as subsidiary or transitory emotions. It has also been indicated that *sthāyibhāva* are innate and present in everyone as they are in the structure of human mind. Their manifestations are visible and they remain in the background.

Vyabhicāribhāva (transient emotions): These mental states are accessory states of the *sthāyibhāva* because they promote or facilitate the *sthāyibhāva*. They appear and disappear in the *sthāyibhāvas*. As subordinates they surrender to the *sthāyibhāvas*. They are also termed as *sañcāribhāva* because they quicken the movement of emotions. There are thirty-three such secondary states including emotions, feelings, and cognitive states. They are: *dhṛti* (contentment), *smṛti* (recollection), *mati* (determining the real nature of an object), *vrīḍā* (shame), *jāḍyam* (inactivity), *viṣāda* (dejection), *mada* (exhilaration and intoxication), *vyādhi* (sickness), *nidrā* (sleep), *supta* (deep sleep), *autsukya* (eagerness), *avahitthā* (concealment of emotional expression), *śaṅkā* (apprehension of harm), *capala* (instability), *ālasya* (apathy), *harṣa* (joy), *garva* (pride), *augrya* (fierceness), *prabodha* (wakefulness), *glāni* (langour), *dainya* (misery), *śrama* (fatigue), *unmāda* (derangement of mind), *moha* (fainting), *cintā* (anxiety), *amarṣa* (revenge), *trāsa* (fright), *apasmāra* (epilepsy), *nirveda* (self-abasement), *āvega* (excitement), *vitarka* (conjecture), *asūyā* (envy), and *mṛti* (death like condition). It may be noted that the same set of transitory emotions works as exciters of some emotions and consequents for some. Also, they can act independently or in a dependent manner. Emotions have a life cycle. They emerge, subside, blend and show friction.

Vibhāvas (determinants/eliciting conditions): This includes all the background information, settings, events, and action tendencies that might make manifest some state of the world and one's relationship to it. Taken together, they define the emotive situation which works as a medium. *Vibhāvas* act as determinant and exciting causes. The *abhinaya* is known by them. They produce *rasa* and make them relishable. It is of two kinds. One is related to the object of *rasālambana*. The *rasa* is based on that. The other is instrumental and stimulates (*uddīpana*) the *rasa* experience.

Anubhāva (consequences): These are physiological changes which are consequent on the rise of emotions and are often considered as effects of emotions. They

include eight kinds of voluntary willful expressions of emotions, such as abusing the body and expressive modes (bodily movements, voice tone, facial expression, wailing and tears). They occur after (*anu*) the emotion (*bhāva*). They work as ensuing causes of *rasa* when it is represented in poetry or drama. *Vibhāvas* may also lead to *anubhāvas*.

Sāttvikabhāvas (Organic manifestations of emotions): These are involuntarily or spontaneous organic expressions. Bharata lists the following eight *sāttvikabhāvas: stambha* (inactivity), *sveda* (perspiration), *romāñca* (bristling of the hairs of the body), *svarabhaṅga* (change of voice), *vepathu* (trembling), *vaivarṇyam* (change of colour), shedding of tears (*aśru*), and *pralaya* (insensibility). These *sāttvikabhāvas* often facilitate each other. They are excited by the *vibhāvas* and intensify emotions. The *sāttvikbhāvas* vary in their intensity.

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19

Why am I here? Implications of self and identity for conceptualizing motivation

Sunil D. Gaur

> O Partha, there is nothing in the three worlds that has to be done by Me, nor anything unattained that has to be attained, yet I engage in action.
>
> —Sri Krishna (*Bhagavad Gītā*: 3.22)

'Why am I here?', 'What is the purpose of my being here?' and 'Who am I?' are the most prominent questions that haunt me the moment I stop engaging with my spiralling web of thoughts or doing some verbal or physical activity. For Harshit, my seven-year old son, the answer is very clear—'I am here because you called me. I want bombs and sparklers for Diwali. I am Harshit'. All answers at one go! Ironically, a quarter-century-long training in psychology has not helped me to go beyond such answers although I have acquired some sophistication in the expression and mastered a bit of academic jargon. But I became also convinced that this analysis is confined to the egocentric perspective of maximization of self-benefits (narcissistic!) without much care for others who too inhabit the world. On the other hand, when I turn to Indian thought, I find quite a comprehensive and meaningful analysis of motivation which aspires for the common good (*sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ*). Against this backdrop, this chapter ventures at reflecting on the received view of motivation and examining some of the Indian ideas and concepts that extend the discourse on motivation by placing it in the context of self and identity and broader human values. It suggests that there cannot be any value-free psychology of motivation.

Motivation in main stream psychology: An overview

I vividly remember that in my first year of undergraduate course I was taught that every behaviour ought to be motivated. The nature and processes of motivation constituted an important domain of psychological discourse. Within its framework

one has to fit whatever (normal) human behaviour can be accommodated, and the unexplained behaviour might be left for clinical psychologists or practicing psychiatrists. Academically pertinent questions that motivational theories had to answer were: Why people *choose* to do certain things rather than others? Why people differentially invest their energy, time and effort into various activities? What is it that gets behaviour *started*? What is it that causes behaviour to *stop*? What is it that determines the magnitude or *intensity* or *persistence* of behaviour? While going through these questions one can easily notice that among all the questions a signal concern for *purpose, directionality,* and *variability* representing the dynamism of behaviour is obvious. Their explanation, however, has proved to be a daunting task for psychologists. They had to infer the dynamism and use the construct of '*motivation*' as an explanatory tool to account for the wide range of variability in behaviours as compared to the changes emanating from other (supposedly non-motivational) factors or influences such as maturation, learning, or any other variation in the internal or external environmental conditions which may result in approximately similar variations in performance.

The explanation of dynamism was sought not only for bridging the gap in the explanatory narrative of behaviour but also to evolve effective strategies for controlling the dynamism for certain material gains and converting effort into tangible results. Thus it was the intention to control others according to one's sweet wish which encouraged motivational theorization. The level of performance needs to be increased, the level of task involvement has to be enhanced, and productivity needs to be multiplied. It is nothing but the potential of using humans as an instrument of capital formation that has been the major theoretical impetus for motivational theories. Motivation is a (human) resource and that has to be exploited. The organizational theories differ in terms of the possible congruence of work with intrinsic human nature. While some consider that humans intrinsically like to work, others deny this and hold that they need to be motivated to work as, by nature, they are shirkers.

It can be easily seen that the motivational issues examined have been informed by certain premises about human nature in general and about the self in particular. The natural science perspective directed the search for the determinants of behaviour in a mechanical fashion, and the Darwinian notion of evolution offered a common perspective to view human and animal behaviour in general. The early psychology of learning (for example Pavlov, Skinner, Watson, Hull) posited reinforcement (motivation) in the form of need or drive reduction or induction as a crucial component of the theory of knowledge acquisition. In this process a reactive model of the human being following a machine metaphor continued to constitute the motivational discourse for behaviouristically as well as psychoanalytically inclined theories. Pleasure seeking and pain avoiding hedonistic tendencies offered the ultimate basis for most theories and constructs of motivation including its pathologies (for example, conflict, frustration, stress, depression, anxiety). This perspective was also extended to the social domain which continued to emphasize need reduction and homeostasis as its main mechanisms. Self-directed

motivated behaviour like exploration and curiosity were marginalized. A shift, however, came with the advent of the cognitive revolution.

The cognitive revolution and the recognition of rationality in human beings led to the emergence of new metaphors which considered a human being as God, judge and scientist (see Weiner, 1992). Understanding actions, plans and goals required handling the question of choice. Accordingly, in the new image, a human being was depicted as a person endowed with the power to rationally think about a future course of action and to regulate present behaviour in its service. Using a micro-perspective, an array of motivational constructs was posited to explain variability and persistence in a wide range of conditions. Following an objectivist view, attempts were made to identify the component psychological elements that predict a given response/behaviour. In this analysis the individual *organism* was crucial but the notion of a person with a socio-cultural identity was missing. The hardcore experimental analysis of motivation, however, could not explain the complexities of human behaviour beyond a point. The clinical approach drew attention to individual differences in needs and motives and yielded an enormous amount of data showing involvement of various intra-psychic, hidden or unconscious processes in directing and sustaining behaviour. Studies of intrinsic motivation showed that reinforcement may have negative consequences for intrinsically motivated behaviour. The social constructionist framework is now situating the discourse towards the person's social and historical settings.

Besides all this, the notion of a predominantly individualistic and egoistic self does not hold true in all cultures. There is growing evidence that many non-Western cultures as well as subcultures within the Western world hold alternative and less- individuated person concepts.

All these changes exemplify a changing conception of personhood implying nothing less than a paradigm shift. The move is towards viewing persons in terms of a dialectical interpenetration of subject, object and surrounding society. The centrality and sovereignty of an independent and separate self in the Western mould is thus challenged on many grounds (Sampson, 1989).

Is man a perpetually wanting animal?

It may be recalled that the initial efforts, rooted in a predominantly reductionist theorizing and organized in a positivistic mode of conceptualization used the notions of *instinct*, *need*, *drive*, *incentive* and *goal* to answer the motivational questions. These constructs were translated into measurable entities using behavioural, physiological, projective, and verbal measures. It was agreed that motives, primary and secondary, are the specific conditions that direct an organism towards a *goal* and motivation is any general condition internal to the organism that appears (*by inference*) to produce goal-directed behaviour. Psychology provides us with never-ending theories of motivation, and management science uses them with great zeal to exploit maximum human potential for increasing product quality and quantity. A long list of motivational factors such as instinct, need, drive, psychological

motives, social motives, primary needs, secondary needs, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation were posited. Motivation was a source of energy and this or that deficiency condition impelled us to act.

The various theories of motivation seem to unanimously agree on a perpetual state of deficiency as motivator. People are motivated to act because of the need to re-establish balance or attain some goal at a biological, cognitive or social level. Beyond the given set of bio-motivators, other sources are acquired through learning. The Humanistic theory of motivation stands on a somewhat different ground. It asserts that people's behaviours are motivated by the desires for creativity, choice, freedom, self-actualization, and feeling of self-worth. The physiological drives, as well as other needs are included. But this model does not go very far. According to the theory, if one is hungry and has inadequate shelter, one wouldn't go to a temple or a church. But the poor tend to be more religious than the rich. Also, it does not account for *santoṣa* (contentment) and situations in which self-dissolution and self-sacrifice are preferred or desired.

A close scrutiny of the existing accounts of motivation make it evident that such views hardly explain the diverse behaviours people exhibit and the wide range of activities in which people engage themselves under varying conditions of reward and expectancy. It is obvious that humans are not automata. Their engagement in various activities pre-eminently involves their specific ideas of self and identity which provide meaning and energy, and which not only sustain their actions in the course of normal life but also lead to creativity and innovation.

Some broader motivational questions and a changing perspective on self

Let us try to answer the following questions honestly:

- Do we want to be free from suffering?
- Why are we here? In other words, what is the meaning of life?
- Will we ever find happiness and love in life?
- Is there meaning in our everyday activities?
- Do we experience real psychological and spiritual freedom?
- Are we suffering from loneliness, lack of motivation, boredom, pain and conflict in our human relationships?
- Where are we going?
- Is there any hope for a positive change in our lives and the world at large?

My hunch is that each one of us desires peace, happiness, joy, and love in life. The tragedy of nearly all Western theories of motivation is, however, that either they emphasize superficial objects as goals (need satisfiers) or focus on entities and objects which invariably are materialistic. And what people obtain on this temporary planet is a temporary and limited satisfaction which is bound to diminish gradually. Everlasting happiness does not occur in a temporary world. This realization of mismatch has led Indian thinkers to articulate motivation in an altogether different perspective. Here human existence is given a divine status and

the purpose of life is twofold—inner growth of the individual, and well-being of all people. The purpose of life is not merely to live for satisfying bodily needs but to pursue greater values, since a virtuous life is a real life.

The analysis of motivation in mainstream psychology, however, has been woven around the construct of 'control'. It captures and documents the individualistic strivings (for example freedom, choice, and autonomy) which characterize the independent and separate self very close to *ahaṁkāra* (egoism). It is in line with the much revered idea that competence is the ability to influence, termed as 'effectance' by White (1959), which is healthy and adaptive, and lack of it is treated as pathological. It is therefore not surprising to find a proliferation of control-concepts in psychology (Misra, 1994). Control in any form—real, imagined or illusory—is desired. It is held that we have a need for self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The notion of control essentially presupposes a duality of self and object, which have different qualities. While self is dynamic, rational, and agentic, and has an inherent tendency to influence the object; the object is passive and dependent on the self. This dichotomy also embodies the dualism between nature and culture, thereby implying a hierarchical relationship between self and object. In order to become a fully functioning person having an identity of one's own, requires that one exercises control over the other (object) on one's own terms and conditions. Being a causal agent, the self functions as a great repository or container of abilities, skills, and attributes accumulated in the past, as well as a source of potentialities. Within this anthropocentric view, each person is for himself, in order to satisfy his own needs. This may be understood as a consequence of the Cartesian division of mind from body and separation of the physical from the mental. A person's maturity is evaluated in terms of individuation and separation from the group and society. Egocentricity is central to it. As Sampson (1985) puts it, the Western identity as 'self-contained' or 'possessive individualism' stands in stark contrast to the non-Western notion of 'ensembled' individualism which maintains a field control and has permeable boundaries between self and other.

Culture plays a deep and essential role in constructing the forms and meanings of human behaviour and experience (Gergen et al., 1996; Heelas & Locke, 1981; Misra & Gergen, 1993). There is a growing understanding (Marsella, DeVos & Hsu, 1985; Shweder & Bourne, 1982) that the meaning of being a person is a cultural accomplishment. Studies (for example, Collins, 1991; Daniel, 1984; Kakar, 1997; Kao & Sinha, 1997; Keyes & Daniel, 1983; Kurtz, 1992; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Marriott, 1989; Roland, 1988; Sinha & Naidu, 1994) bring out that the self in Indian and Asian cultures is often conceptualized in relational and transcendental (transpersonal) ways in which interdependence, harmony and sharing become critical. Most importantly, this view holds that the experience of control is distributed and not localized either in the person (internal), or in the situation (external).

The Indian perspective on self and motivation

The Indian tradition construes human existence as part of the universal order. All

activities, therefore, are viewed according to the criteria of maintaining harmony across physical, social and spiritual worlds. There is unity in life forms, and all entities are supposed to share common attributes. Existence is organized with the help of the principles of *dharma* and *karma*. The idea of *dharma* encompasses the social as well as natural order. It assumes that at both levels the same kind of processes take place. In this view, there is respect for the idea of shared existence, and recognition that others too like to seek freedom and autonomy. In this sense, freedom and self-determination are not absolute. Instead, they are considered as contingent upon self-control (*svādhīnatā*) and self-regulation (*jitendriya*). Thus a distributed view of control is advanced.

We may recollect that the incarnation of the Divine, as the *Bhagavad Gītā* states, is to establish the order of *dharma* (*dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya saṁbhavāmi yuge yuge*) which happens to be the supreme life value. Accordingly, human beings, being part of the Divine, also share this value to discover the inherent meaning of life. In other words, it is not merely to live life as a biological organism but living life with a purpose. That is why it is emphasized in many places that it is *dharma* only which distinguishes humans from animals.

The term *dharma* is used to refer to many things including law, nature, merit, justice, rule, intrinsic quality, norm, truth, category, duty, and morality. It denotes something that supports the lives of people. Since it protects it is called *dharma*. In fact, *dharma* represents the principle which sustains the world in which we live and is upheld by the people at large. *Dharma* is neither uniform, nor static, nor absolute. It is relative and cannot be applied indiscreetly to everybody or everything.

Keeping this in view, the Indian psychology of motivation becomes a psychology of inculcating and sustaining values in the context of an encompassing notion of self. The Indian view of self is different from the prevalent notion of an 'individualized self' that has dominated Western scholarship, which promotes a concept of individual or personhood in which the boundaries are fixed, and autonomy and cutthroat competition are highly valued and celebrated. Independence from others and control over the non-self stand central. Non-Western cultural traditions, particularly in the Asian region (for example, India, China, Japan, Korea) have nurtured diverse indigenous models of self, which uphold possibilities to nurture other values much needed in the contemporary world. The main features of this kind of self-orientation are: embeddedness in the social context, interdependence, connectivity, and emphasis on relationship. The features of social structure and its institutions such as family, kinship, and marriage coupled with a still largely agrarian economy have made this kind of self-orientation pertinent (Misra, 2001; Misra & Giri, 1995; Roland, 1988). It seems that this kind of relational and encompassing model of self implies a different kind of motivational system. A societal orientation in achievement strivings (Agrawal & Misra, 1986; Dalal, Singh, & Misra, 1988; Singhal & Misra, 1994) coupled with the focus on control over internal states has promoted a shared notion of control (Misra, 1994). The cultural grounding of motivation (D'Andrade & Strauss, 1992) recognizes that diverse schemas of goals are drawn by individuals from the cultural repertoire available, to forge their self-images.

Marriott (1989) noted that in the Indian mode of thought varied codes of action or codes of conduct (*dharma*) are thought to be embodied in actors, and otherwise substantiated in the flow of things that pass among actors. Persons are 'dividuals' or 'divisibles'. To exist, divisible persons are reciprocally related to objects. Roland (1988) has noted that the 'spiritual self' and the 'familial self' are important aspects of Indian selfhood. While the spiritual self stands for the inner reality present within every person but realized in different degrees, the familial self is a 'basic psychological organization' that enables functioning in the Indian setting characterized by a hierarchical, intimate relationship of the extended family, community and other social groups. Roland has detailed this in terms of sub-organizations such as reciprocity, empathy, we-self regard, narcissistic configurations of we-self regard and a socially contextualized ego ideal.

Empirical studies have shown that the conceptualizations of the Indian self have elements of individualism and collectivism (Mines, 1988; Misra & Giri, 1995; Nakamura, 1964; Sinha & Tripathi, 1991; Tripathi, 1988; Daniel, 1984). As Ramanujam (1986) notes, the individual is part of the corporate system, the whole system, which therefore determines his goals and shares his destiny. Thus, the Indian self is continuous with others and shares the space of others, and is in immediate relation with them. The individual develops through participating in a unity of all things. Interpersonal behaviour depends on the factors of role, place and relationship. The ordinary self is viewed by Indians as highly context specific and only under special moments of revelation or realization a context-free self-feeling is experienced (Collins, 1991). As Kakar (1978) has noted, the basis of a relationship develops through mutual caring, involvement and emotional affinity. This relationship orientation and dependence has implications for organizational behaviour (Chakraborty, 1994; Sinha, 1995). The construal of the Indian self is 'indexical'. In this conception 'self is not an entity existing independently from the relationships and contexts in which it is presented. It is constituted by social interactions, contexts, and relationships. The self is created and re-created in interactions and contexts, and exists only in and through these' (Landrine, 1992, p. 406). The indexical self is not a separate entity that can be referred to or reflected upon in isolation. It includes other people and portions of the natural and supernatural world. As a social being, roles in relationships become important in defining the self and guiding people's behaviour. At this stage a person has options. He may lead the life of a righteous person, acting according to *dharma* or he may opt for a still higher level of life goals—the goal of liberation (*mokṣa*). One who chooses to move toward this option focuses on the transcendental reality. In this way human life is treated as full of potentialities and choices.

Ahaṁkāra and *ātman*

It seems amply clear that the goals of both individuality and relatedness are to be attended to in any comprehensive account of motivation. This, however, still does not go far enough because there is a very strong spiritual or transcendental

concern expressed in diverse conceptualizations (for example *bhakti*, *jñāna* and *karma*) and cultural practices which keep reminding us of the purely temporary nature of the bodily, empirical self. As Desai and Collins (1986) have noted, there are two aspects to the Indian self—*ātman* (conscious selfhood or 'I'-ness) and *ahaṁkāra* (mineness). *Ātman* is supposed to be independent and transcendent of temporal changes and particulars. In contrast, *ahaṁkāra* represents the inflated sense of personal worth, which is a consequence of the ignorance of one's true being. Thus there is a need for transcending it by considering it an instrument (*nimitta*) for a greater divine cause or for realizing its potential as a manifestation of divinity, as brilliantly articulated in the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo (see other relevant chapters in this volume). This defines the central task of the motivational theory: to help in realizing the specific constraints and possibilities of one's being; to facilitate the knowledge and (re)discovery of who one is in reality. This goal is nothing less than the emancipation of all.

The Indian, Hindu perspective considers the *ātman* or inner self as the real self which transcends the empirical self, which is socially embedded, context sensitive and subject to continuous change. Spiritual interiority and social duty are both considered important. The individual (*jīvātman)* is construed in terms of a structure with five sheaths (*pañca koṣas*). They include the body, the senses, the mind or thinking organ (*manas*), the ego (*ahaṁkāra*), the intellect or instrument of reflection (*buddhi*) and finally the *ātman*. The self consists of the *ātman* which is a spiritual entity. The realization of one's true self or *ātman* is a state indistinguishable from the absolute reality called *Brahman*, which is free of both form and matter. *Ātman* can get fused with the material elements and we in our ignorance (*avidyā*) misidentify with various acquired identities (*upādhis*) and develop attachment to them, but *Ātman* in itself is a non-material self, as opposed to the material or empirical ego (*ahaṁkāra*).

Ahaṁkāra or ego is held to be the root cause of all kinds of attachment. While it is an important part of existence, if it is left undisciplined it increases arrogance and causes misunderstanding. During the life span from birth to death the body undergoes continuous change and therefore the physically rooted self is temporary (*anitya*), but people engage in self-adoration and consider themselves as respectable and wise. Practically it is a complex in the mind which furnishes this sense of entitlement. It is thought that 'the world owes it to me, I don't owe to the world and I am entitled for this status'. This is *mānitva* and such a person always evaluates, brands, and neglects other people. The human tendency to keep sycophants around and enjoying praise is because of this. Praise enhances self-esteem and we feel elated. It results in *dambha* or the tendency of showing off. People want that others should worship them and they exhibit and show off to impress others. Contrarily if someone is happy with him or herself (*ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭaḥ*) then there is no need for exhibition. In today's world the tactics of impression management, self-presentation and social influence are valued and taught primarily because egoistic self-motives are at a premium.

Realizing the inherent limitations of the egoistic-self motives, the Indian view

suggests that one must have forbearance and that if others harm us, we should not retaliate. During our lifetime, particularly during the period of our youth, we are forgiven by teachers, parents, friends and neighbours. This forbearance helps one to grow as it provides opportunities for the same. Egoistic motives, when thwarted, promote the development of defence mechanisms. Thus we take recourse to repression, suppression, rationalization, and intellectualization. Ego processes cause insecurity and anxiety. Tense, in response to external events, a person tries to escape and deny the problem. To this end, the Indian view maintains the principle of *ārjavam* (straightforwardness) or alignment of thought, word and deed. *Ātmavinigraha* or control of body and making it cooperative is equally important. The acquired identities (*upādhis*) tell us that we are limited, while the Indian spiritual view declares that we are limitless.

The excitement offered by sense objects is such that the human mind easily forgets the problems and feels good, and attaches emotions to the objects and memories. This kind of relationship with sensory objects (*viṣaya samparka*) causes bondage or *āsakti* (attachment). *Āsakti* grows with association and makes people more vulnerable. In our ignorance we cling to this attachment. Contrary to it, readiness to walk away from any situation is *asaṁgatva*. Having equanimity of mind (*samatva*) regardless of the external situation is therefore a more viable proposition. Desirability and undesirability are certainly provisional conclusions and it is primarily our attitude that makes us happy or unhappy. In fact a *sāttvika bhoktā* is one who is enjoying his or her life working for the good of others. In other words, it is a kind of enlightened state when a person accepts whatever life brings.

The goal of the higher or inner self is to expand one's empirical self and to develop identity with one's higher and more inclusive spiritual self. This process of enlarging self-identification is *dharma* and it has implications for personal as well as social well-being. These ideas are directly related to questions of motivation in the context of *puruṣārtha*.

Puruṣārtha: A life of action

The framework of *puruṣārtha* symbolizes action and effort by a person as well as an over-arching set of life goals. The three *puruṣārthas* (*trivarga*) consisting of *dharma, artha* and *kāma* articulate a meaningful theory of motivation. The fourth one named *mokṣa* was subsequently added to it to make it a meta-theoretical view of human endeavour covering worldly as well as spiritual pursuits. Taken together, these four life goals (*puruṣārtha catuṣṭaya*) furnish a useful perspective for human motivation. *Puruṣārthas* cover all life's activities including the physical, social, psychological and spiritual domains. Interestingly, *artha* and *kāma* are put between *dharma* and *mokṣa*. In other words, *artha* and *kāma* are to be pursued in the context of *dharma* and should be in congruity with liberation or emancipation (*mokṣa*). The *Mahābhārata* offers numerous precepts about *puruṣārthas*. Following *dharma* leads to well being. Life and death are determined by *dharma*. It purifies a person. *Dharma* wins and *dharma* increases by following *dharma*. One should follow that

dharma which does not create problems for others. *Dharma* is to behave within one's limits. Where there is *dharma* there is victory.

Karma

The *Mahābhārata* declares that success in life is an outcome of one's effort. Without *karma* nothing can take place. The effort is treated as the field and *daiva* (luck or fortune) is like the seed. The crop is the outcome of the interaction of both of them. One alone is not enough. *Daiva* does not help without effort and effort by a person intensifies the power of the seed. Thus lack of effort or lack of support from *daiva* may fail to yield the results. *Daiva* is not something independent as it is formed on the basis of earlier actions and is therefore subject to voluntary control. A person can change one's *prārabdha* by performing the right kind of action. In general, the notion of *puruṣārtha* brings into focus the role of human action in shaping human destiny. Both effort and destiny are important. Destiny without effort and exertion without destiny do not work. But in the end, effort is more important than destiny.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* states that action (*karma*) is better than *akarma* or non-action. The actor enjoys the fruits of his own action, as *karma* continues to haunt a person. A person whose mind is set on doing work is praiseworthy. One must perform actions without attachment (*anāsakta*). One must be skilled in the type of action that brings prosperity. The ignorant store only delusions by their deeds. As a man makes from a heap of clay whatever he wishes to make, so does a man achieve various results out of *karma*. People free from all attachments become free from the fetters of *karma*. Yet, good and bad deeds are not destroyed. Good deeds result in happiness and bad deeds lead to woe.

An interesting feature of the karmic theory of action is that actions are influenced by several factors. The responsibility for 'making' an action is distributed, and multiple causes are involved and no one can proclaim a single cause of action. The *Bhagavad Gītā* (18: 14) outlines a set of five essential constituent factors that make any action possible. They are: action (*adhiṣṭhāna*) or body; agent (*kartā*) or the person engaged in the action; instruments (*kāraṇa*) or materials; separate activities (*ceṣṭāḥ*); and divine providence (*daiva*). Thus any action undertaken is necessarily a joint function of all five constituents. Since action is a natural impulse organized by multiple factors, the contention of assuming authorship by someone and thinking that 'I am the doer' is nothing but a sign of egoism (*ahaṁkāra*) and ignorance. This puts the person on a wrong track because of too much preoccupation with the outcomes. In order to overcome this problem the principle of non-attachment (*niṣkāma karma*) was put forward. Having an attitude of detachment is found to help in overcoming stresses (Pande & Naidu, 1992).

It may be noted that human life is full of continuous activity in which any action is not merely a discrete response made to a specific stimulus. We are always engaged in a flow of activities. Every action is preceded as well as followed by other actions. This flow of action is regulated through the principle of *karma*. In

this way the present action is determined by previous or past action, and future action is determined by the present action. Thus action is in itself an outcome (in the form of present action) as well as a potential cause (in terms of the outcome of present action). Also, engaging in actions is a natural tendency and action is multiply caused, but it does not imply that human beings have no responsibility. They have their share of responsibility as agent and as experiencer (*bhoktā*) of the outcomes. This is important because our existence is interdependent. The Indian thinkers have been very keenly concerned with it. To illustrate this point one may look at some of the core values which have been often treated as key motivators in everyday life. This list can be very long but for want of space we may limit ourselves to one, *satya* or truth.

Satya or truth

Satya or truth refers to existence itself and is conceptually very inclusive. It is interesting, and instructive too, that etymologically to exist is *sat,* to exist is *asti*, existence is *astitva* and the property that maintains existence is *satya*. One of the important analyses of *satya* is available in the great epic *Mahābhārata*. Truth is the highest value and has been considered as equal to *dharma*. Nothing is higher than truth. Therefore the injunction: one must speak the truth and one should not speak untruth. Everything that exists is rooted only in truth. Truth is known by its thirteen attributes, which include *samatā*, an attitude of equality; *dama*, self control; *amātsarya*, absence of envy; *kṣamā*, reconciliation, forgiveness; *hrī*, modesty; *titikṣā*, endurance; *anasūyā*, not to find fault with others; *tyāga*, renunciation; *dhyāna*, concentration of the mind; *āryatā*, nobility of conduct; *dhṛti*, forbearance; and *ahiṁsā*, non violence (*Mahābhārata* 12, 156: 10–22). The detailed characterization of these attributes given in the *Mahābhārata* is as follows:

- Truth is that which is undifferentiated, abiding, and without any defect: it is obtained through the discipline of not doing anything against any *dharma*.
- Equality lies in displaying the same attitude towards friends and foes: it is achieved by destroying the feelings of attachment, antipathy, desire and anger.
- Self-control consists in not desiring things that belong to others; in the seriousness and steadfastness of purpose; in the absence of deviousness; and in the conquest of anger: it is obtained by knowledge.
- Absence of envy consists in mental restraint while giving gifts, and in doing one's appointed duty: it is achieved through truthfulness.
- Forgiveness consists in being able to bear the behaviour that is intolerable and the speech that is unpleasant: it is achieved through truthfulness.
- Modesty consists in securing what is good for others, without regret and always with peace within: it is achieved by following *dharma*.
- Endurance is the capacity to bear difficulties in pursuing *dharma* and one's desired object.

- Not to find fault with others consists in seriousness: it is achieved by generosity.
- Renunciation consists in giving up partiality to things as well as sense-gratification: it is achieved by rising above attraction and repulsion.
- Concentration of the mind is achieved through silence.
- Nobility of conduct consists in working constantly for the good of others: it is achieved through giving up attachment to things for oneself.
- Forbearance consists in rising above happiness and suffering: it is achieved through constant forgiveness, by sticking to truth, and by conquering fear and anger.
- Non-violence consists in malice towards none, in act or in thought or in speech, and in kindness and generosity to others.

Truth also implies existence, and something which goes against life becomes untruth. So truth should be in consonance with *deśa* (place) and *kāla* (time). As stated in the *Mahābhārata* 'to save others from being killed is a most superior *dharma*; if by speaking a lie, a life is protected, then speak the lie'.

Conclusion

In conclusion it may be stated that the Indian perspective on motivation goes beyond the prevailing models of egoistic and reductionist psychology. Informed by an extended notion of self with physical, social and spiritual facets, it offers a view which explains functioning in an interdependent world. It bridges the divide between the self and the non-self, and aspires to function in a holistic and organic paradigm. It has potential to overcome the limits of the individualistic formulation of motivation of control, and favours orchestration of the personal and non-personal.

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20

The principles and practice of *karma yoga* in the writings and life of B. G. Tilak[1]

Anand C. Paranjpe

Karma yoga is a means for liberation of the self with the primary emphasis on action as opposed to emotion or cognition as in respectively *bhakti yoga*, and *jñāna yoga*. There cannot be an *exclusive* emphasis on *only* action, emotion, or cognition in any pathway to self-realization, since all three aspects of personhood are present in, and necessary for the functioning of, every person at all times. The different pathways are named according to the *relative emphasis* on one or other aspect of personhood, and individuals may follow predominantly one or the other pathway depending on their natural aptitude or inclination.

Karma yoga, alternatively called *karma mārga*, or pathway to liberation with emphasis on action, has evolved over the millennia as have the other pathways. The literature describing, explaining, and advocating them has also evolved over the centuries. However, unlike the extensive literature available on Sāṁkhya and Advaita systems on the path of knowledge (*jñāna yoga*), or Patañjali's aphorisms and its standard commentaries that offer a step-by-step guide to concentrative meditation (*dhyāna yoga*), it is hard to find an extensive body of literature on the path of action. The *Bhagavad Gītā* is often thought of as a principal source in support of *karma yoga*. However, the *Gītā* adopts an eclectic approach, and is virtually a compendium of a large number of alternative approaches to self-realization. A highly popular text, it has been interpreted as being especially supportive of their favourite path by partisan interpreters. In modern times B.G. Tilak (1915/1998) wrote *Gītārahasya*, a major commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā* suggesting that it clearly and strongly favours *karma yoga*. This work, originally written in Marathi, offers a clear exposition of the doctrines of *karma yoga*.[2] Swami Vivekananda (n.d./1915) has also a book-length work on the subject. The present account primarily follows Tilak's exposition of *karma yoga*, and presents a sketch of his life history as an illustrative case of its practitioner.

Part I — *Karma yoga*

The Sanskrit word *karman*, or simply *karma,* means action or activity, and the Law or Doctrine of Karma provides a broad conceptual framework within which action can be conceived for theoretical and practical purposes. It is within the framework of this doctrine that not only *karma yoga*, but also most schools of Indian thought are structured. Before beginning an account of *karma yoga* it is necessary to recount some of the basic concepts explained as part of the section devoted to the Law of Karma, and also to explain certain related concepts that are especially relevant to *karma yoga*.

Conceptual foundations of *karma yoga*

It is important first to remember that in the Indian tradition, *karma*, meaning action or activity, is conceived as being simultaneously part of the physical (*kāyika*), mental (*mānasika*), and verbal (*vācika*, or 'conversational') as well as moral (*dhārmika*, or *vaidika*) domains. Each action is believed to leave behind it traces that have consequences in each of these domains. It is common to conceive of these traces metaphorically as seeds that sprout or fructify, that is, lead to appropriate consequences under appropriate conditions. Extending this metaphor, it is thought that the seeds get 'stored' within individual living beings that serve as receptacles for the seeds, as it were. The seeds may lay dormant for indefinitely long periods of time. The putative longevity of the seeds implies their survival over endless life cycles in a succession. This assumption of longevity serves an important purpose within the widely accepted and long-living Indian worldview. The Law assumes that every action has its inevitable consequences. In that sense it is parallel to the law of causality in the physical sciences, but unlike in the physical sciences, it is deemed to apply equally to physical, mental as well as moral domains. It is believed that good and bad actions will inevitably have their respectively good and bad consequences. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.5) makes this moral implication of the Law of Karma quite clear when it says: 'The doer of good becomes good, the doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action' (see Radhakrishnan's translation, 1953/1994, p. 272).

One way of understanding the good and bad consequences of action is to view them in terms of rewards and punishments. Such a view appears in the interpretation of the Mīmāṁsā school according to which right action is what is prescribed in the *Vedic* scriptures, and this would be 'rewarded' with a place in heaven (*svarga*) and vice versa. The thinkers of the Mīmāṁsā tradition did not think of some celestial authority such as God who would administer this system or rewards; indeed they did not believe in God (*īśvara*). Instead, they viewed good/bad consequences as naturally following from an invisible force called the *adṛṣṭa* (which literally means 'unseen') generated by all actions. Such an interpretation distinguishes the Law of Karma from justice administered in society according to the prevailing code of conduct, for it implies consequences of actions that result

according to a cosmic system of nature, rather than according to social regulations. The concept of *adṛṣṭa* which was thought of as a kind of force that persists as long as it brings about its natural consequences further distinguishes the notion of a cosmic rather than social system of justice implied in the Law of Karma. This is because the *adṛṣṭa* as a force is supposed to survive death of the body such that miscarriages of justice within the human-made systems would be corrected in life after death; indeed belief in reincarnation (*punarjanma*) is a corollary of the Law of Karma. This implies that the world is a just place; justice will ultimately be done, no matter how many incarnations of the soul it takes. A popular saying in the Hindi language says that there is delay in God's world, but no darkness, that is, lack of justice. This assumption preserves the hope that crooks will *ultimately* be punished and saints will be eventually properly rewarded, although justice is often unmet in their lifetime. Such beliefs could as well be the soothing balm for the disgruntled moralist. Nevertheless, the Law of Karma, like the belief in the Day of Judgment, may serve a psychological purpose, and help sustain the moralist on a righteous path.

The Law of Karma is a common theme in almost all schools of Indian thought, both orthodox as well as heterodox, such as Buddhism and Jainism, with the exception of the materialist followers of Cārvāka and Lokāyata. As pointed out by Wilhelm Halbfass (1991, p. 295), in the Indian tradition, the Law has served in various ways, as: '(1) a principle of causal explanation (of factual occurrences); (2) a guideline of ethical orientation; (3) the counterpart and stepping-stone of final liberation'. As a causal explanation, the concept of *karma* has the widest connotation, covering physical movements, mental events, as well as intentional action with moral implications. When the Law of Karma covers this entire range, it implies the assumption that the universe is a cosmos and not chaos; nothing occurs as a happenstance. Taken in this sense the Law is similar to the basic assumption of causality in modern science. As noted by Potter (1964), such 'laws' are fundamental assumptions that are taken for granted without needing proof. They provide the necessary framework for a systematic inquiry, for the presumption of the universe as chaos would arrest inquiry before it is started. The Law of Karma gives a similar framework for an inquiry of phenomena in the moral domain; it accepts the 'just world hypothesis' (Lerner, 1980) to help make moral quest a meaningful endeavour. Although justice is often *not* seen to be made in the lifetime of persons, it assumes that justice will ultimately be done. Lapses in the human system of justice tend to be ignored even as science often ignores anomalies rather than rejecting the universality of the law that is apparently violated. It is interesting however, that as noted by Halbfass, the relevance of the Law of Karma in Indian thought goes even beyond the physical and moral domains: it steps into the spiritual domain when taken as a stepping stone for final liberation. It is in this sense that Tilak takes it, using it as a conceptual framework within which to build his case for *karma yoga* as a legitimate and effective pathway to liberation (*mukti*). Before we examine how Tilak develops his explanatory strategy within this framework, we need to understand a few more nuances of the concept of *karma*.

Parallel to the concept of *adṛṣṭa* is the concept of *saṁskāra*, which is commonly used in *yoga*, and is particularly relevant to psychology. From the *yogic* perspective, all mental phenomena such as perceiving, thinking, imagining, doubting and so on are activities of the mind even as physical movements are activities of the body. All such activities leave their impressions behind, and these impressions are called *saṁskāras*. The *saṁskāras* are imprints of original mental activities that tend to revive experiences similar to those that caused them under appropriate conditions. For instance, the pleasant experience of the aroma of coffee one morning would revive a similarly pleasant experience at the breakfast table the next morning, and may prompt action toward making a fresh cup of coffee. In this sense, a *saṁskāra* is like a memory trace that revives images of the original experience, and it tends to 'reinforce' the behaviour that accompanied the earlier pleasant experience. As in modern psychology, *yogic* psychology also conceives of *saṁskāras* as pleasant or unpleasant, and indicates their positively or negatively reinforcing nature just as modern learning theories do. However, unlike modern psychology which claims to be value free and avoids any moral implications, *yoga* conceives *saṁskāras* as having moral merit (*puṇya*) or demerit (*pāpa*). Against this background, it should be clear why in India the term *saṁskāra* is also used to indicate good or bad influences on a child arising from situations to which it may be exposed either inadvertently or by design. Thus education, whether inspired by secular or religious interests, would be designed to maximize 'good' *saṁskāras* as defined by the values of the educators. The rituals introduced in Hindu traditions at various stages of life, such as those of the child's naming, initiation (the 'thread ceremony'), wedding and so on are also called *saṁskāras* since they are designed to shape behaviour in culturally appropriate ways.

In Yoga, as in Advaita and other systems informed by the Law of Karma, each individual is believed to carry with her or himself the entire storehouse of the impressions left by her or his own past actions, good and bad. The Sanskrit word for this cumulative fund of merit and demerit is *sañcita*, which literally means that which is stored. The term *karma* is also used to designate the 'seeds' left behind by past *karma*, and hence the term *sañcita karma* to designate the stored seeds. This concept should not appear to be alien or strange to students of modern psychology; it is closely equivalent to what behaviourists would call the entire repertoire of behavioural tendencies originating from the genetic and historical background of the organism. As in the behaviourist context, responses appropriate to the environmental conditions are elicited in the presence of adequate stimuli with appropriate experiences of pleasure or pain to accompany the responses. The pleasant and unpleasant experiences constitute 'rewards' and 'punishments' as dictated by the same natural laws that may be viewed from an amoral perspective by the behaviourists, and from a moral perspective according to the *karma* theorists. At any rate, according to the traditional Indian worldview, *sañcita*, the cumulative repertoire, is conceptually divided between two parts: the portion that has already begun to play out under the present circumstances (*prārabdha*), and all the rest which has not yet begun to play out (*anārabdha*) and thus belongs to

the future. It is widely assumed that the results of what has begun to play out are unavoidable—like the consequences of an arrow that is released from the bow. The consequences of the left over are, however, considered preventable. In this context, the question is: how could one orient oneself so as to reap the positive consequences while avoiding the negative ones? In other words, how can we effectively deal with the burden of the past (or the cumulative effects of the past 'reinforcements', to use a contemporary phraseology)? Tilak explicitly asks such a question, and uses it as a point of departure for his explanation and justification of *karma yoga* as an effective vehicle for a spiritual journey toward liberation.

Tilak (1915/1998, p. 257) points out three different answers to this question that evolved in the Indian tradition through the ages. Tilak's delineation of these three approaches is not his original interpretation; he explicitly traces it back to the dialogue between Sulabhā and the sage Janaka in the *Śānti Parva* (320.36) section of the epic *Mahābhārata* (Tilak, 1915/1998, p. 261). The *first* approach emphasizes *action* mainly in the form of *rituals* prescribed in the *Vedas* (*vaidika karma*) as means to liberation (*mukti*). It belongs to *karma kāṇḍa*, meaning part of the *Vedic* lore, especially the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, which offers elaborate descriptions of complex rituals prescribed as means to help attain prosperity on earth or a place in heaven. It is the interpretation of the *Vedic* commandments by scholars of the Pūrva Mīmāṁsā school that is central to this approach, and *not* the symbolic meanings and mysticism of the *Ṛg Veda* that is pointed out by Sri Aurobindo in his *Secret of the Veda* (1914-1920/1971).[3] The *second* approach emphasizes *knowledge* rather than action as means to liberation. It belongs to the *jñāna kāṇḍa*, the *Upaniṣadic* portion of the *Vedic* lore, which emphasizes knowledge (*jñāna*) as opposed to ritual as means to liberation. What is relevant here is the interpretation of the *Upaniṣads* offered by the scholars of the Uttara Mīmāṁsā school, alternatively called the Vedānta due to the *later* origin of the *Upaniṣads* after the Brāhmaṇas. The *third* approach involves an emphasis on engaging in action without attachment to rewards, and is explained mainly in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. We shall consider these three approaches to *karma yoga* one by one, emphasizing Tilak's views of the same.

The *Mīmāṁsā* approach to action as sacrificial ritual

Jaimini's *Mīmāṁsā* aphorisms (Jaimini, n.d./1984) begin with a quest for the nature of *dharma*, which in this context implies right action or moral duties. Indeed, Jaimini defines *dharma* in terms of *Vedic* injunctions or commandments.[4] This should make perfect sense, since the concern for action is necessarily the concern for doing the *right* thing, and it is *moral imperatives* that point to right action. It should be no surprise, then, that in *Gītārahasya* Tilak pens a chapter titled 'inquiry into the nature of karma' (*karmajijñāsā*) to discuss moral dilemmas in light of traditional Indian as well as modern Western theories of ethics, such as the views of Kant, Green and Mill. Working in early historical times, Jaimini turned to the ancient *Vedas* for moral guidelines. To that end, he developed rules for the correct interpretation of the scriptural texts to delineate the *injunctions* or

moral directives that the sages gave. Following these rules of exegesis, called the *mīmāṁsā* in Sanskrit, led to the formulation of Jaimini's system called the Pūrva Mīmāṁsā. Its designation as *pūrva*, meaning earlier, distinguishes Jaimini's system from the interpretation of later *Vedic* texts (that is, *Upaniṣads*) which is called the Uttara Mīmāṁsā or Vedānta. The primary directive of the *Vedas* is the conduct of sacrificial rituals. While some rituals are to be performed every day, such as the evening prayer (*sandhyā*), others are appropriate for specific occasions such as a death anniversary (*śrāddha*), and still others are recommended for fulfilling special desires *(kāmya karma*), such as birth of a son in this life or a place in the heaven in afterlife. Before we examine the meaning and psychological significance of sacrificial rituals, we need to understand certain concepts and assumptions relevant to this context.

Consistent with the widely shared perspective of the Law of Karma, the Mīmāṁsā thinkers like Jaimini believed that the impressions left behind by every action constitute a force, and called it *adṛṣṭa*, meaning the unseen, and conceived of it as a cause that inevitably results in appropriate consequences. Calling it 'unseen' makes sense, since a cause, as a connection between an event and its effect, is never directly observed as David Hume (1739/1978) pointed out in eighteenth century Europe. The assumption of causality in the Mīmāṁsā system is similar to the presumption of inexorable laws of nature in modern science (Potter, 1964)[5], except that while in Mīmāṁsā causal laws extend to the moral sphere, in natural science they do not. In other words, good actions must result in good consequences or rewards and bad actions in punishments. Since it was believed, as noted above, that it was impossible to avoid the consequences of causes that have already begun to manifest, the question before the Mīmāṁsā thinkers is—what can be done to stop the perpetuation of the chain of consequences of good and bad actions and be free from the cycle of birth and death?

Dasgupta (1922/1975, p. 402) summarizes the Mīmāṁsā perspective as follows:

> Salvation is brought about when a man enjoys and suffers the fruits of his good and bad actions and thereby exhausts them and stops the further generation of new effects by refraining from the performance of kāmya-karmas (sacrifices etc. performed for the attainment of certain beneficent results) and guarantees himself against the evil effects of sin by assiduously performing nitya karmas (such as the sandhyā prayers etc., by the performance of which there is no benefit but the non-performance of which produces sins). This state is characterized by the dissolution of the body and the non-production of any further body or rebirth.

As can be easily seen, this is a moralists' stance, and its view of morality is tightly tied to the scriptural injunctions which emphasize rituals. Tilak's (1915/1998, pp. 230–231) is not in favour of this approach. For, he notes, new actions and their impressions arise incessantly in the very fact of living, and complex situations arise where avoiding bad action is not always possible. Murky situations of daily life

often present complex moral challenges that often produce mixed results that are neither completely meritorious nor the exact opposite. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to exhaust the mixed bag of good and bad consequences at precisely the same point in time and attain release at the exact moment when the balance has stopped swinging between the plus and the minus side of the ledger. All these are apparently intractable *logical* difficulties with the Mīmāṁsā's rationale for sacrificial rituals as means to liberation. Note also that the Mīmāṁsā approach ties down moral implications exclusively to rituals prescribed by the *Vedas*, ignoring the moral implications of inevitable mundane actions of daily life, which are inevitable. There is of course a suggested way out of such difficulties by the path of knowledge, which claims to destroy the *entire* accumulated fund of impressions of past action *at once* in one single stroke by 'burning the seeds by the fire of Self-knowledge'. We shall examine its rationale later in this chapter.

Aside from questioning the *logic* of the Mīmāṁsā approach, Tilak points out the *historical changes* in the *Vedic* religion that makes it irrelevant or redundant. Writing in the early twentieth century, Tilak (1915/1998, pp. 245–246) notes that the ancient *Vedic* practices were no longer in vogue in his time; the traditions had already eroded under the influence of Buddhist opposition to animal sacrifices and other historical circumstances. Over the centuries, focus had shifted away from the *Vedas* or the *Śrutis* as guidelines for moral conduct. A myriad of *Smṛti* texts, such as the *Manusmṛti* and texts of the *Dāyabhāga*, *Mitākṣarā* and other systems had started to guide the moral and legal thought in the Indian subcontinent. Their guidelines were based on principles such as truth, charity, compassion, non-violence and others that originated from the *Upaniṣadic* tradition. On the whole, this later approach to ethics tried to ensure the welfare of the population as a whole, rather than aiming only at the higher castes that were supposed to be eligible for conducting the *Vedic* rituals. The overall thrust of the *Smṛtis* was on articulating right conduct as appropriate to each social category (*varṇa*) and phase of the life cycle (*āśrama*) of a person. In this context, doing one's duties as appropriate to one's station in life became the new way of understanding *yajña*, that was defined in earlier days primarily in terms of sacrificial rituals under the influence of Jaimini and others. Tilak explains the principles underlying *yajña* as understood within both the ancient *Śruti* and later *Smṛti* guidelines. It is necessary to briefly describe Tilak's analysis here since it provides some interesting psychological insights to the traditional approach to behavioural guidelines.

One of the basic principles underlying the concept of *yajña* was the idea that every human being is born with three kinds of debts that he or she must pay back as the unavoidable duty in life (Tilak, 1915/1998, p. 246). The *first* one is the debt to the ancient *sages*, which was to be paid back by *studying* the scriptures and preserving the legacy of knowledge the sages left behind. The *second* one is the debt to the *gods* to be repaid through offerings made to the sacred fire in ritual *worship*, and the *third* debt is to one's *ancestors*, which is to be repaid by producing and raising the younger generation and passing the cultural legacy to them. According to a tradition that was still in vogue in the early twentieth century, a householder

was expected to perform a fivefold sacrificial ritual (*yajña*) every day. In these rituals various sacrifices were to be made to various forms of the divine: daily study of the *Vedas* as per debt paid to Brahman, the ultimate principle of reality; food and other goodies symbolically offered to satisfy one's ancestors; making similar offerings to the sacred fire, a symbolic messenger to the gods; feeding the animals in the vicinity, and offering food to all hungry humans around. One was supposed to eat only what was left over after satisfying all these varied forms of the divine: the gods, the ancestors, and animals and humans in the vicinity. What was thus left over was considered nectar conferring immortality (*amṛta*), and anyone who eats without first feeding all the needy was considered a sinner (Tilak, 1915/1998, p. 245). The spirit behind this ritual is explained in the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*, which says that everything in the world belongs to the Lord (*iśāvāsyamidam sarvam*); one has right to eat whatever is left over by satisfying others' needs. Doing otherwise simply constitutes theft.

Within almost a century that has passed since Tilak wrote the *Gītārahasya*, the tradition of the daily performance of complex *Vedic* fire rituals that had somehow survived till his days has virtually disappeared at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Yet, the concept of *giving* that underlies the tradition of *sacrificial* rituals has persisted. In ordinary forms of worship, that are in common practice of millions today, one offers morsels of food or spoonfuls of milk and honey to the sacred fire, saying I offer this to such and such deity; 'this is not mine' (*idam na mama*). These oft-repeated words denying exclusive private ownership is a *mantra* that is heard again and again in Hindu worship well into the twenty-first century. A sight that is still not uncommon is a person bathing in a local river, saying—'Oh Ganges (any rivulet could be taken as symbolic representative of the sacred river), I offer you this bit of water in my palms; I give this back to you, *it is not mine*.'

The idea behind such daily rituals should be obvious, but let us see how Swami Vivekananda explains it in his book *Karma Yoga*: '[R]itual is, in fact, concretized philosophy. This ritual is *karma*; it is necessary in every religion, because most of us cannot understand abstract spiritual things until we grow much spiritually' (Vivekananda, n.d./1915, p. 90). The principle is of course that of giving, or charity, which is common to virtually all religions. Repeatedly saying 'this is not mine' as part of daily and occasional rituals is expected to reduce greed and possessiveness, and the common feeling of 'me' and 'mine'. The symbolic sacrifices of food and other goodies in rituals are designed to impress on every mind every day that good things of life belong to Nature, they are not for individuals to hog. Private possession and consumption of any of those things is all right only after they are consumed by all and sundry to satisfy their needs. Call it socialism if you will, or maybe an ecological concern for Nature, but that is the spirit of traditional Indian culture. Vinoba Bhave, a distinguished disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, recognized this, and tried to revive the traditional attitude to giving by appealing landowners to grant at least part of their holdings to the landless (Bhave, 1953). His '*Bhūdāna Yajña*', a movement to give away land in one's possession, did not catch on; it failed to bring about a socialist revolution as intended. Despite the

ideals behind their design, the rituals remain, well, 'mere rituals'. Humans have the capacity to translate philosophy into relevant action if they want, but they also can trivialize or pervert it, just as they can abuse a good thing like science for mass destruction.

Jñāna yoga's approach: The burning of the seeds of action

In contrast to the Mīmāṁsā approach to action by way of sacrificial rituals, the Vedānta or Uttara Mīmāṁsā system suggests a different, radical way to deal with the cumulative store of the past *karma* (*sañcita*). It extends the metaphor of the 'seeds' by adding the idea of 'burning' the seeds to render them incapable of sprouting ever again. The 'fire' to be used for this purpose is Self-knowledge. The *Bhagavad Gītā* (4.37) says—Just as once kindled fire reduces all the firewood to ashes, the fire of Knowledge reduces all seeds of action to ashes.[6] This metaphorical bonfire is expected to get the self-realized person free from the entire burden of one's own past action instantaneously in moments of genuine insight into the nature of the Self. How is this idea supposed to work?

According to the Advaita system (see Paranjpe, 1988; 1998), the primary focus in its 'path of knowledge' (*jñāna mārga*) is to discover the single unchanging principle underlying the many diverse manifestations of the ego. Normally a person identifies the 'I' with what one knows or thinks, feels, or does. But viewed in the long run, one cannot be *permanently* identified with any of one's beliefs, feelings, and actions. It is not unusual for people to believe one way now and in the opposite way later; learn to hate something that was once dearly loved; or completely reverse a course of action once held steadfastly dear. The 'I' is thus capable of completely transcending cognition, affect, and conation. The true Self is experienced in a transcendental state of awareness, or the state of *nirvikalpa samādhi* in which experience is emptied of all thoughts. One who has experienced such 'self-realization' recognizes that he or she is NOT the one who thinks, feels, and acts. One discovers that the entity that was supposed to enjoy the rewards and suffer punishments as result of past actions is a mere construction, an imaginary entity. When the enjoyer/sufferer thus disappears in thin air, as it were, there is no place either for the fear of suffering in the future, or for a lure of rewards in this life or anytime later. The impressions accumulated from the past are thus rendered totally ineffective—like burnt seeds.

Śaṅkara, the arch proponent of the Advaitic approach to the path of knowledge, insisted that liberation could be attained through Self-knowledge *alone* (*jñānādeva tu kaivalyam*). According to Śaṅkara, *karma* in the form of performing rituals prescribed by the *Vedas* or other forms of good action may be useful simply in purifying the mind (*cittasya śuddhaye*), that is, as preparation for starting on the path of knowledge, nothing more. Although many followers of the Advaita tradition stick to this view, not all of them do; many others hold that a combination of knowledge and action (*jñāna-karma samuccaya*) is needed for attaining liberation. There is an unending controversy among followers of Śaṅkara's Advaita

tradition who hold these differing views about the relative importance of knowledge and action. In *Gītārahasya* Tilak (1915/1998) strongly opposes Śaṅkara's view about knowledge as the *only* means to liberation. Tilak is also opposed to Śaṅkara's view that one must renounce all social involvements common to a householder, both before and after attaining self-realization. He suggests that Śaṅkara's pro-renunciation (*nivṛtti*) views are product of his historical background, his teacher's teacher having been a Buddhist monk. Tilak refers to an ancient tradition of social involvement (*pravṛtti*) among persons deeply involved in spiritual life going back to the sage Janaka of the *Upaniṣadic* era, and wished to start a movement to revive that tradition. His advocacy of *karma yoga* is an integral part of that movement.

Tilak's view of *karma yoga* as action without attachment to rewards

The basic rationale of *karma yoga* can be found in the *Bhagavad Gītā*'s analysis of the various factors involved in the results of an action. According to the *Gītā* (18.14), the following five factors are involved in accounting for the totality of results of any action: (1) the location or context of action (*adhiṣṭhānam*); (2) the agent (*kartā*); (3) the various instruments (*karaṇam*) available on hand; (4) the specific activities (*ceṣṭāḥ*) involved in the action, and finally (5) chance, or 'fate' (*daivam*). It should be clear that the outcome of an action would be quite different if it is performed in a quiet and congenial location as opposed to a noisy and unhygienic one; if performed by an experienced and expert agent as opposed to a novice; if one is well equipped to do the job rather than being empty handed; if the actions are clumsy rather than smooth and skilled; or if lightening suddenly strikes in the middle of the action rather than a cool breeze. The *Gītā* (18.16) adds that such being the case, it is only an unintelligent person who thinks that he or she is solely responsible for the outcome while ignoring all the contributing factors. Moreover, the *Gītā* (3.27) points out that while indeed the interaction of various forces of nature is responsible for any event to happen, an egotistic person thinks that credit for its accomplishment must belong to him and him alone. Against the background of this analysis, *Gītā* (2.47) advises us to note that only one's own actions are under one's control (*karmaṇyevādhikāraste*), the total outcome is never [fully] within our control (*mā phaleṣu kadācana*). And hence, it says, one should neither be solely focused on the fruit of the action, nor is it necessary to despair due to the uncertainty of rewards and give up the undertaking on hand.

The rationale just explained is, according to some, the very essence of the *Gītā's* teaching. All this is, indeed, simply common sense. Anybody who is prepared to pay a bit of attention to what is involved in his or her successes and failures can realize that the credit or blame for success and failure might most often be reasonably distributed across a bunch of different factors. As such, it should be possible for any person with a little intelligence and some capacity for self-reflection to begin acting in real life without getting emotionally worked up by excessive hopes of success or fear of failure. If this is correct, then one need not wait till becoming fully self-realized to begin a march on the path of *karma*

without attachment to the results of one's action. According to Tilak, one can start with a modest degree of insight into one's own behaviour, and gradually proceed all the way to liberation. It is possible to attain full-fledged self-realization through the experience of *samādhi* sometime along the way, but one need not wait till such a moment to attain liberation.

Tilak is quite aware of the fact that it is natural for persons to act with an intention, hope, desire, or even expectation of an end result while starting on a course of action in real life. None of these, in his view, are harmful. What really matters, and 'binds' the doer to the consequences of his or her action, is hankering for specific results, being covetous or avaricious (Tilak, 1915/1998, p. 274).[7] Tilak (1915/1998, p. 241) quotes a couplet from the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (6.34), which asserts that it is the mind that causes both attachment to the world, as well as the liberation from it. While 'binding' (*bandha*) results from emotional investment in objects, 'release' (*mokṣa*) results from the absence of such investment. As modern psychology affirms, it is the *expectation* of future reward that reinforces an organism's response rather than the reward itself, and expectation is a 'mental' entity, not physical. From Tilak's viewpoint, it is the excessive investment of affect (called *āsakti* in Sanskrit) in the expected outcome that causes problems in life, and it is possible to willfully reduce the strength of this binding force. The very process of an initial rational reflection can *detach* a person from the immediate context of action, and help reduce the investment of affect in that context. Tilak's contention is that even a slight reduction in ego-involvement through reflection—call it a cognitive intervention, if you will—can start a person on an irreversible course of successively increased level of detachment. Gradual change in this respect is bound to reduce possessiveness, and eventually eliminate greed, thereby radically transforming one's orientation to 'Me' and 'Mine'. The transformation expected in this process would counter egotism and yet strengthen one's self-confidence, or courage to carry on onto a course of action regardless of success or failure. It would reduce selfishness on the one hand, and build up the capacity for cooperation, empathy and compassion for others. A successive reduction in selfishness and ego-involvement would be conducive to increased investment in collective goals, and that is what Tilak expects to happen as one progresses on the path of action.

A gradual shrinkage in selfishness and a matching increment in social involvement is expected to ultimately end in the *karma-yogi's* realization of the unity of all individual selves, and the merger of the *yogi's* self with the universal Self (*paramātman*, or Brahman) (Tilak, 1915/1998, p. 283). Committed to the traditional Indian way of life, Tilak expected all men to perform all the legitimate duties of a householder in the status and position to which one is assigned. This implies a person's inevitable involvement with immediate as well as extended family. One should perform one's occupational duty with commitment and pride, he suggests, no matter if the job is as humble as that of the signalman on the railway lines (p. 282). He points out that society could not function normally unless everyone in the entire social hierarchy does his or her job properly. Further, Tilak (1915/1998, p. 337) explicitly refers to the desirability of a person's feelings of belongingness

to, and pride for, successively more inclusive ingroups, such as her/his family, clan, caste, religion, nation and so on. Moreover, he considers an increasing sense for a series of successively expanding groups as a natural progression toward a universalist feeling for entire humanity as a single family (*vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*). It is not necessary to dilute one's feelings for any of the smaller ingroups, whether family or province, to be a genuine universalist. Even if we had a perfect society in which unity of humankind was a reality, we could not dispense with belongingness to, and pride for, a series of smaller groups contained within more inclusive groups.

In Tilak's opinion, in an imperfect society where one large group dominated another of its type, such as one nation against another, it is legitimate for the oppressed one to fight against the oppressor (p. 338). He surely did not see non-violence as a practicable one-way policy in the real world, and he did not see fighting for the legitimate cause of a group as inimical to the ideal of universal brotherhood. He was explicitly aware of the fact that concentric loyalties to less inclusive groups can sometimes conflict with more inclusive groups—such as province versus nation—, and he had an explicit answer to what ought to be done under such situations. Loyalty to a larger, more inclusive group must take precedence, he suggested, to a smaller, less inclusive group (1915/1998, p. 338).[8] Finally, he explicitly disapproved the individualist approach to spiritual involvement by pooh-poohing enjoyment of *samādhi* as a mere selfish act (Tilak, 1915/1998, p. 279).

Tilak considers this *social* aspect of the evolution of the individual self in the context of the traditional concept of *lokasaṅgraha*, literally meaning bringing people together. Tilak (1915/1998, pp. 277–278) explains what he means by this term. He first locates it in the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* (3.20). The context of this reference is that in this chapter (3.3-9) Lord Krishna is conveying to Arjuna—at least as Tilak interprets it—the superiority of *karma yoga*, which favours social involvement (*pravṛtti*) over the *jñāna yoga* of the Sāṁkhya system which favours renunciation (*nivṛtti*). He then criticizes (p. 277) Śaṅkara's interpretation of the term *lokasaṅgraha* as attempting to turn people away from the tendency toward evil. Then he goes ahead to suggest (pp. 278–279) that the '*loka*' part of the compound term *lokasaṅgraha* should not be interpreted to mean only human beings, and adumbrates with numerous textual references that it means all living beings—even ancestors in heaven, gods, and demi-gods. In Sanskrit verses he composed by way of dedication of his *Gītārahasya*, Tilak says that he is dedicating the work to *janatātman*—a neologism coined in analogy with *paramātman* by substituting the word *janatā*, meaning people, for *parama*, meaning the Supreme.

The above account should make it clear that knowledge, in the form of a cognitive insight into the relatively limited role of the agent in the outcome of action, has an important role in Tilak's prescription. The thrust of *Gītārahasya* is clearly to convey to the reader that the identity of the individual self with the universal Self is a most important lesson to learn. The discovery of this identity is of course, the province of knowledge. Thus, *jñāna yoga* is also important, if only second in rank to *karma yoga*—as a step along the way, as it were. If so, one may ask, how does he view *bhakti* and *dhyāna* in this context? As to the first question,

his answer is clearly given in a separate chapter on *bhakti* in the *Gītārahasya* (Ch. 13). First he points out that even a scientist insisting on perfect rationality cannot dispense with trust, call it devotion if you will, since the scientists' belief in the universal natural laws cannot be based purely on experience or reason. No one can assure that the sun *will* rise again tomorrow, he points out, no matter how many trillions of times the sun may have been seen to rise night after night. This point is not an exclusively Indian insight; Hume, the committed empiricist of eighteenth century England, had pointed out that one cannot reasonably generalize from *many* to *all* instances in any category, no matter how large the number of instances. It is not difficult to find similar arguments from Christian thinkers in the context of the 'reason versus faith' controversy in late medieval Europe (Jones, 1969, pp. 196–207).

Tilak follows the *Gītā* in suggesting that the path of knowledge requires thinking hard about abstract issues, which many individuals may be incapable of doing due to their limited intelligence. By contrast, *bhakti* implies loving, and even persons with low intellectual levels may have a natural capacity for love. Moreover, devotion usually—if not necessarily—involves the use of a *concrete* symbol that is much easier to focus on when compared with the highly abstract notion of a formless God. Focusing on a symbol of divinity is made much easier if the symbol is a personified being, especially a loving, assuring, forgiving, caring mother- or father-figure. The practice of *karma yoga* is much easier, he suggests, if one learns to surrender the fruits of all action to a loving personal god. In this connection he points out the common practice in Hindu prayers to say '*Kṛṣṇārpaṇamastu*', meaning let this be dedicated to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, and to a couplet of a similar meaning addressed to Lord *Nārāyaṇa*. Despite his strong support to *bhakti*, Tilak is against superficiality, blind faith, and fanaticism. He writes words of caution about religious devotion by pointing out *first*, that many people go to the temple not to pray but to ogle at the opposite sex, and *second*, that followers of many religious groups insist that only their chosen symbol is the right one and are ready to kill others who choose a different symbol.

As regards *dhyāna yoga* Tilak explains his position clearly in his comments on Chapter 6 of the *Gītā* in *Gītārahasya*. He points out the usefulness for a *karma-yogi* of taming the sensuous desires as in *haṭha yoga*, and of the concentration of mind as prescribed in Patañjali's *yoga*. He recommends spending some time every day in such *yogic* practices as *dhyāna* or concentration, but explicitly suggests that one should not spend twenty four hours a day in such practices. He also cautions against the overenthusiastic use of *haṭha yoga* practices that sometimes result in extra-ordinary powers that tempt practitioners to their misuse.[9]

A modern psychological interpretation of *karma yoga*

Karma yoga can be easily seen as focusing more on action or behaviour than on cognition and emotion, and in this respect it is similar to the behaviourist approach. However, here the similarity between the two ends. Whereas in the

behaviourist approach behaviour is viewed primarily as a mechanically induced response to external stimuli, in Indian thought informed by the Law of Karma, behaviour is viewed as intended action. Moreover, it is the attitude behind action that is emphasized somewhat in a way that in Piaget's perspective the reasoning behind the response to a dilemma is considered important. To be specific, in Tilak's view, what is important is the intensity of desire for intended results (*āsakti*) that matters the most. In sharp contrast to Skinner's radical behaviourism, which totally rejects free will, Tilak strongly argues in its favour. In fact Tilak (1915/1998, p. 227) devotes a whole chapter[10] of *Gītārahasya* to explain the conundrum following the controversy over free-will with special reference to the determinist position of modern science, and concludes in favour of free will. In this regard he quotes from the Vedānta aphorisms of *Bādarāyaṇa* (2.3.33), who defends freedom of the will basically on grounds that morality becomes meaningless unless we presume freedom.[11] Also, in sharp contrast with Skinner's denial of the self, Tilak affirms the Self as experienced in the state of *samādhi*. Moreover, unlike Skinner (1974, p. 225), who flatly denies the self as an originator of action, Tilak takes human agency as the very foundation of his approach to life. Also, while Skinner proposes a 'psychology of the "other one"', Tilak's approach is framed within a system of psychology that has the Self at its core. Whereas applications of Skinnerian psychology aim at changing someone else's behaviour, Tilak's approach is focused entirely on transforming oneself by one's own effort. Tilak, following the system of the Vedānta, strongly affirms the Self, although he recognizes the workings of the ego which tends to often take the undeserved credit for success.

Indeed, the recognition of the tendency of the ego to take undeserved credit for success is a basic insight on which the enterprise of *karma yoga* rests. This insight is interestingly similar to Freud's insight that the ego deceives itself, as it were, by *projecting* blame for failure on something other than oneself while implicitly assigning more credit for one's performance than deserved. This similarity is ironic, since while psychoanalytic intervention tries to strengthen the ego against the moralistic repression of the pleasure-seeking id within the constraints of reality, and aims at the uninhibited sating of instinctual desires, *karma yoga* proposes reining-in of desires by systematically cultivating dispassionateness. This does not mean that Tilak adopts a kill-joy attitude toward sex. Indeed, as follower of the traditional Indian values, he implicitly considers the satisfaction of sexual desires (*kāma*) as one of the four major goals prescribed in life for men (*puruṣārtha*).[12] In affirming free will Tilak implicitly accepts an autonomous ego, and in this respect his position is more like the ego-psychoanalysts such as Anna Freud and Erik Erikson, than like Freudians who assume a perpetually conflict-ridden ego. Speaking of Erikson, Tilak's ideal of expanding the boundaries of the ego to embrace the entire humanity is much like Erikson's view of an ideal psychosocial identity for men and women—an identity that 'seeks human brotherhood in self-denial' (Erikson, 1974, p. 41).

In sharp contrast to most psychoanalysts, who view emotions as the most important aspect of human beings, Tilak's view of human nature seems to give

emotions the last priority. As to cognition, Tilak under-rates it, but places it right next to the top below volition. Without the recognition of the common human tendency to take more credit to self than deserved, the enterprise of unattached action could hardly begin. Such tendency is a matter of cognitive deficit, as it were, and modern cognitive psychologists have had much to say about it. Note, for instance, that following the lead of Harold Kelley (1971) attribution theorists have conducted many empirical studies on internal versus external attribution of success and failure. The 'cognitive deficit' implicit in Tilak's observations just mentioned is basically a tendency to attribute success to an internal factor such as the self, and failure to external factors such as luck or lack of instruments. Anthony Greenwald (1980) has coined a neologism 'beneffectance' to refer to the common tendency to take credit for success to self and project blame to outside factors. He quotes many research findings in support of this concept, including Cialdini's famous observation that fans of a college team often said '*we* won' when the college team won, but spontaneously said '*they* lost' when the team lost a game (Cialdini et al., 1976).

Although such modern insights are basically no different from Tilak's ideas following the ancient text of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, there is a fundamental difference between their approaches to psychology. While Kelley, Greenwald and other cognitive psychologists act like pure scientists focusing primarily on the discovery of general laws governing behaviour, they are generally loath to try application of such laws in real life. True, there are many clinical psychologists like Beck (Beck et al., 1985), Mahoney (1993) and others who use insightful discoveries of cognitive psychology as bases for designing therapeutic strategies. However, the orientation of clinical psychology is primarily to develop intervention strategies that clinical practitioners could apply in changing clients' behaviour, rather than developing strategies that interested persons could use in helping themselves in attaining the highest levels of self-development. The latter is, clearly, the specialty of applied psychology of the type that developed in the Indian tradition. Against this background, seen from the vantage point of contemporary clinical psychology, *Gītā*'s *karma yoga* as explained by Tilak may be thought of as a method of 'cognitive behaviour modification' of the self-help variety.

The mention of self-help psychology in this context may cause some misunderstanding, and some explanation is needed to dispel it. Unfortunately, the self-help type of psychological intervention in recent times is often considered 'pop psychology' utterly lacking in academic respectability. This lack is probably the result of the lack of conceptual rigor expected by academic psychologists, and the lack of monetary return expected by professional clinical psychologists—for self-help makes the clinician redundant! However, *karma yoga* as advocated by Tilak belongs to a different cultural context where spiritual practices require initiative and self-help on behalf of a serious minded seeker of enlightenment. In that context, the guru or spiritual master does not expect fees from the seeker as a professional clinical psychologist would, nor would an author need to avoid intellectual rigor in the name of catering to a popular market as a writer of pop-psychological tome

would. Moreover, contrary to a common misconception, *karma yoga* is not part of a religious cult where blind faith is demanded, and questioning discouraged. Indeed, Tilak's *Gītārahasya*, although addressed to a wide audience, is a scholarly treatise based on deep knowledge of the Indian as well as Western philosophy, not a book of light reading. It is inspired by the tradition of Śaṅkara, who is recognized as a logician in the league of Aristotle and John Mill. Moreover, Tilak's approach is based on analytical reasoning that encourages further critical thinking and welcomes demands for evidence. Indeed, in recent years the *Gītā's* approach to action without attachment to outcomes has inspired serious empirical research looking for evidence with the use of the methodologies of contemporary psychology. That is the topic we would now turn to.

An empirical test of the working of *karma yoga*: The work of Pande & Naidu

In a trend-setting work, Namita Pande and R.K. Naidu designed and conducted a series of studies that combined the theoretical framework of indigenous Indian origin with a methodology imported from the West. Their specific purpose was empirically testing the *Bhagavad Gītā*'s approach to action without emotional attachment to outcomes. To that end, they focused on the concept of *anāsakti*, literally meaning lack of attachment. They defined it as an orientation to action which emphasizes effort more than outcome, combined with the cultivation of emotional equipoise in the face of success and failure, a relatively weak concern for obtaining extrinsic rewards, and an intense effort to achieve excellence. This was conceived as a matter of individual differences (or a personality 'trait') measurable by means of a self-report questionnaire of the type commonly used in contemporary psychology. The items for this questionnaire were constructed on the basis of the description in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* of '*sthitaprajña*', which literally means a person of stable intellect. Such a person, it is suggested, manifests the characteristics of an ideal condition attained through the successful practice of *karma yoga*. The thrust of Naidu and Pande's research program was to administer the *Anāsakti* Scale to a significant number of subjects, and to correlate its scores with a variety of measures of mental health, such as stress, strain, experience of anxiety or distress and so on. It is neither possible nor necessary to review the many studies that were conducted in the research program using the scale to measure *anāsakti*. However, it may be simply noted that the major conclusion of some of their research reports (Pande, 1990; Pande & Naidu, 1992; Naidu & Pande, 1999) was that high scores on the *Anāsakti* Scale were associated with lower perceived stress and distress and other such measures of mental health.

It would be useful to make some general observations to help place the empirical research just mentioned in a broader context. First, it demonstrates that it is possible to meaningfully combine a traditional Asian perspective with methods of modern Western psychology. Second, the principle of *karma yoga* that suggests benefits following from focusing on action rather than outcome need not be viewed as something unique to this particular *spiritual* path; similar benefits can

occur in fairly mundane enterprises—in competitive sports, for example. Thus, in his doctoral research Roy (2004) observed that athletes who show long term involvement in highly competitive sports tend to enjoy more—and even attain higher levels of success—when they focus on sporting activity itself disregarding win or loss. Indeed in highly competitive sports such as the Olympics, hundreds of aspirants put in great deal of time and effort. Every one of them knows very well that on the final day only three will mount the podium. If an athlete counts the odds, she or he would despair; the main reason they do not give up is because most learn to intensely focus on the activity itself, and derive pleasure from the activity itself. As the saying goes, there is more pleasure in the journey itself rather than in reaching the destination, and the 'journey' might involve all sorts of activities including the most mundane. To put it simply, the basic principle of *karma yoga* has a very wide range of applicability to all walks of life. It is important to note that Pande and Naidu conceived of the benefits of the orientation to action suggested by the *Gītā* as yielding benefits to common individuals in various degrees, and this point has deeper implications for understanding *karma yoga* that may have been unintended in the conception of the research project. It implies that *karma yoga* need not be viewed as some distinctive and specialized spiritual pursuit that might result in a highly exalted state of *sthitaprajña* putatively in very rare individuals recognized as saints. Nor would such an ideal condition suddenly emerge following the moment of self-realization in the experience of *samādhi*. Rather, the practice of the basic principles of *karma yoga* may occur unknowingly or knowingly in the lives of ordinary persons in various degrees, gradually leading to mental health benefits ranging from an imperceptible reduction in anxiety to the highest level of spiritual attainment.

This last point is particularly relevant in the examination of the life of Tilak, who is known more as a political leader than either as a typical *yogi*, or a member of the galaxy of saints from the Buddha and Jesus to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Sri Aurobindo or Sri Ramana Maharshi. Yet, he was not a mere politician, nor simply an academic, and it would be interesting to see whether and in what way the principles he propounded were reflected in his life. Before we turn to an examination of Tilak's biography as a *practitioner* of *karma yoga*, however, it is necessary to briefly explain the strategy and methodology we could adopt in embarking on such an examination as a *psychological* study.

A psychological approach to the study of life history

The use of biographies as data for psychological study is relatively new and also rare in psychology. In some ways, the study of a biographical account may be seen as a variation of the method of case study which is widely used in clinical psychology. Freud is easily seen as a pioneer in the use of case studies such as those of Anna O, and of Wolf Man, which he used to illustrate specific types of psychopathology, or the case of Little Hans used to explain the concept of the Oedipus Complex. We need not here be concerned about the many legitimate

criticisms that Freud's case studies have faced over the years; the point is that they have established the usefulness of case studies in psychology. Case studies are particularly relevant in clinical psychology to substantiate the use of a diagnostic category and also to indicate a therapeutic strategy based on its interpretation within a theoretical framework. It is possible to use the case study approach outside of the clinical field as well. Abraham Maslow (1954/1970), for example, has suggested the names of several well-known individuals as illustrative cases of self-actualization, which indicated an ideal form of personality. However, Maslow did not engage in elaborate examination of biographies of such persons. The credit goes to Erik Erikson for introducing systematic studies of biographies of persons, especially those of exceptional or highly accomplished individuals such as Martin Luther, Mahatma Gandhi and Thomas Jefferson (in respectively 1958/1962; 1969 & 1974). By way of rationale, Erikson's approach follows the 'personological' approach of Henry Murray, who considered life history or elaborate biography of individuals as primary data for the study of persons. Focus on an individual as a whole and viewed across the entire span of life implies a holistic approach that stands in sharp contrast with the focus on specific (and often pathological) aspects common in clinical psychology, and on common traits viewed across individuals in today's personality psychology. Such a holistic approach is specifically suitable to the traditional Indian perspective on personality.

The present essay follows primarily Erik Erikson's approach in the study of the biography of an exceptional person, but with a major difference. Erikson used his theory of the eight stages of the development of personality, which was grounded in Freudian psychoanalysis and in the ego psychology of Anna Freud and others, to analyze the life and work of all the persons he studied regardless of the distinct philosophies of life that shaped the lives of those persons. By contrast, the idea here is to use the philosophy propounded by Tilak to help understand how it shaped his own life. The main thrust here is the idea that what you preach should be what you practice; this is a distinctly Indian perspective, a kind of a principle of authenticity. This is particularly true of spiritual pursuits; in the spiritual context it would be meaningless to say one thing and do another. Thus, Sri Ramana Maharshi, practiced *jñāna yoga*, which he advocated, and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who preached that various spiritual paths lead to the same ideal state actually practiced several paths under the tutelage of accomplished practitioners of several paths. Against this background, it makes sense to examine the life of a proponent of *karma yoga* as a *karma yogī*.

In a study such as this, published biographies serve as the basic *data*; good biographers painstakingly search through archives and often interview persons closely connected with the subject of the biography. A good biography provides *observations* by many persons about the *actions* of a given individual often providing detailed accounts of the *contexts* of those actions. It is true that in some cases, especially where the subject of the biography is a charismatic or highly accomplished individual, what the author presents is a hagiography where bias predominates. So the psychologist must be careful in sifting truth away from

hyperbole. But then some biographers also offer interpretation in addition to descriptions of facts. In using biographical accounts as data the psychologist is not so much a direct observer of facts but a selector and interpreter of accounts presented by the biographers. The interpretive task belongs to hermeneutics. There is no standard methodology with clearly stated hermeneutic principles yet developed for the study of persons using biographies as data. In the absence of explicit rules and guidelines, one must depend on common sense and do the best one can to relate concepts on the one hand, and accounts of events in life history on the other.

Part II — The life of a karma-yogi: Lokamānya B.G. Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920) was a foremost freedom fighter, who used primarily his writings as a journalist against the British Empire to arouse patriotic feelings among his countrymen. His remarkable success in this endeavour earned him the epithet 'Father of the Indian unrest' at the hands of a British journalist Sir Valentine Chirol. *Lokamānya*, which literally means respected by people, was a title by which he became widely known just as his junior Mohandas Gandhi became known by his title *Mahatma*, meaning a great soul.

Tilak was born on 23 July 1856 in the coastal region south of Mumbai. Since early childhood he distinguished himself as a very bright student. He started his career as a mathematics teacher in New English School that he founded along with his friends. Soon after this he founded the Fergusson College, where he taught mathematics and Sanskrit. Soon thereafter he resigned from this position due to differences of opinion with his colleagues. Following this he started classes to train would-be lawyers, and earned a reputation for his expertise in law. He then started two newspapers, *Kesari* in Marathi, his native language, and *Mahratta* in English. Using these as his base, he started a number of public activities, all geared to arouse public opinion against the injustices of the imperial government, and to inculcate intense patriotic feelings in the nation.

The first one among the activities which Tilak initiated was the public celebration of the annual festival of god *Gaṇeśa*, which was up till then normally celebrated as a family affair. As expected, this public celebration brought Hindus of all castes and creeds together. However, it was sometimes viewed as a way of uniting the Hindus against the Muslims, who were perceived as finding excuses to start riots against the Hindus with the tacit support of the British government. Another such activity promoted by Tilak was the public celebration of the birth anniversary of Chatrapati Shivaji, a seventeenth century king and hero who turned the tide of the Mughal rule in the southern parts of India. Both celebrations continue till this day as highly popular public events particularly in Maharashtra, the Marathi speaking region of Western India.

During the early days of his journalistic career, Tilak wrote several articles in his newspapers against what was seen as injustices against the heir of the princely

state of Kolhapur by the chief minister of that state named Barve. In retaliation, Barve filed a libel case against Tilak and his co-editor Agarkar, and won. This led to his first imprisonment in 1882.

Tilak began direct participation in politics starting with an election to the governing body of Bombay University, and then continued with elections at the municipal, state and national levels. He won an election to the provincial legislative council after the British Government allowed such elections in 1892 as part of its program for political reform. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1889, and soon gained national prominence as one of its most influential leaders. Within the Congress he distinguished himself as a radical in contrast with influential moderate leaders, such as Ranade, Gokhale, Sir Pherozshah Mehta and others. While the moderates believed in petitioning the government for participation in local self-government and other such rights, Tilak proclaimed that complete political independence was the birthright of every citizen, just as liberation (*mokṣa*) was the natural goal for every soul. Small wonder that he ran foul with the British government, and suffered repeated imprisonment.

In trying to control the plague epidemic of 1897, the British government used police force to drive people out of their homes in the city of Pune to quarantined areas out of the city. The police used excessive force. There were several instances of desecration of idols in homes, theft of property, and allegations of dishonouring women. As a result there was widespread fear and rage against the police rule. In response, the Chaphekar brothers assassinated a police chief named Rand, who was in charge of plague control activities. Pro-Government newspapers started innuendo suggesting Tilak's involvement in the plot to assassinate Rand. The fact that Tilak was among the leaders who publicly justified the killing of the Mughal general Afzulkhan by Shivaji in the 17th century provided the background for such innuendo. Notwithstanding allegations of inciting Rand's assassination, Tilak continued writing articles denouncing police atrocities. Thus, the title of one of his articles was 'Has the government lost its head?'[13] (Kelkar, 1928/1988, Vol. 1, p. 544; Tamhankar, 1956, p. 78). Such strong words and relentless complaints against oppressive bureaucrats added fuel to the fire, and the government took Tilak to the court on the serious charge of sedition. This was in 1897, the first time that he was tried for sedition. While citing his commendable work in assisting the people in settling in quarantines outside the city, and in providing them medical help as reasons for his leniency, the judge sentenced Tilak for eighteen months of hard labour (Kelkar, 1928/1988, Vol.1, p. 572).

The substandard food and other conditions of the prison took a toll on Tilak's health. However, with the intervention of Indian and European intellectuals, Tilak was given some limited facilities such as the use of books and an oil lamp for reading in the night. He used these facilities to read Max Müller's edition of the *Vedas* and other references and continued his studies of ancient Indian civilization while in prison. He is reported to have experienced a great sense of joy when he stumbled over a reference to a two-month-long night before daybreak mentioned in the *Vedas*. This reference led him to infer that the *Vedic* Aryans lived near the

North Pole where days and nights are very long. He developed this theme in a scholarly work called the *Arctic Home in the Vedas*.

In the midst of all the political activity, journalistic pressures, and religious and social programs, Tilak found time not only for serious scholarship but also to form a large number of close friendships. In trying to help a close friend, a wealthy man named Bābā Mahārāj, Tilak suffered an inordinate amount of trouble for over two decades. While suffering from cholera and lying on his deathbed, Bābā Mahārāj asked Tilak to be one of the trustees of his estate. He specifically requested Tilak to look after the welfare of his pregnant wife, and find her an adoptee son in case she fails to give birth to a male child, or if her son dies young. When her son died an infant death, Tilak helped Mahārāj's widow in finding a suitable male child from a family of blood relations, and formally adopt him in accordance with the local tradition and legal provisions. However, eyeing her big estate, one of the trustees named Nagpurkar tried to get the adoption annulled in favour of a boy of his choice. Under Nagpurkar's influence the young widow, Tāī Mahārāj, filed a court case against Tilak and other trustees alleging irregularities in regard to the adoption. Nagpurkar found great support from Aston, a British district officer, who was trying to find excuses to implicate Tilak, a thorn in the side of the government. The result was a series of very serious trumped-up charges, including unlawful confinement of Tāī Mahārāj in her residence, unlawful assembly around the residence, persecution of Nagpurkar and Tāī Mahārāj, preparation of forged documents, and deceit. The Inspector General of Police named Bruin, who was appointed to investigate the charges, recommended dropping of the charges for lack of substantiation. Yet, Aston pressed the charges, and a biased court declared him guilty, sentencing him for eighteen months of rigorous labour plus a fine of one thousand rupees. Ironically, the judge cited Tilak's selflessness and spotless character as the reason for this 'light' sentence (Phatak, 1999, p. 193).

A tireless fighter and a legal tactician of high order, Tilak appealed the sentence. Although the original case was a civil matter regarding adoption with little or no relevance to anyone other than a widow and the trustees of her estate, it was turned into a highly publicized criminal case. A highly respected gentleman was manacled as a common felon to make a point. The young age of the widow and the suspected profiteering from the estate gave enormous opportunities to Tilak's enemies for endless innuendo and character assassination. In fact one of the Judges involved in the case, Chandawarkar, indulged in casting aspersions against Tilak's honesty (Kelkar, 1928/1988, Vol. 2, Pt. 3, p. 30). The case and its appeals to higher courts caused him a lot of agony, let alone heavy expenses and a constant distraction from his numerous political and scholarly undertakings. Nevertheless, the High Court found Tilak innocent of every criminal charge, his conviction was set aside, and the amount paid in fine was refunded. Although the criminal case thus ended with his vindication, the civil case regarding the dispute over the adoption was taken all the way to the Privy Council, the highest court of appeal in the British Empire. Tilak won the appeal, thus ending an ordeal that lasted over twenty years. This final and full vindication considerably added to Tilak's already

high reputation as a saintly man of impeccable character and boundless fortitude. Recognizing the role of the British bureaucracy in taking special interest in the case with the view of persecuting one of their staunchest critics, the public rewarded him by raising money for his defence.

Another important episode in Tilak's life began after Lord Curzon decided to adopt the highly unpopular policy of the partition of the province of Bengal. The agitation against this policy took an explosive turn when an angry young man named Khudiram Bose tried to assassinate Mr. Kingsford, a district magistrate, at Muzafferpore. Although the bomb missed its target, two English women were killed. The pro-British press started blaming the Nationalist leaders for inciting racial hatred, and British officers started a series of repressive measures against suspected youth and their leaders. Tilak wrote some articles in *Kesari* in which he drew parallels between the situation in Bengal and the Czarist tyranny in Russia. One of his articles titled 'These remedies are not lasting' suggested that the right solution to avoid people's rage against the British bureaucracy was to start granting them important rights of self-rule. The Governor of Bombay Sir George Clarke (later Lord Sydenham) found Tilak's articles objectionable, and charged him of exciting disloyalty and hatred against the Emperor and the Government of India (Tamhankar, 1956, p. 176). Thus began his second trial on the charge of sedition (this was in 1908—the first one being in 1897).

Tilak's defense involved hair splitting arguments disputing the correctness of translations of original Marathi words into English words like 'despotic', 'repressive', 'arbitrary', and so on. But an interesting point was made by Tilak's counsel, Mohammed Ali Jinnah (later recognized as the farther of the nation of Pakistan), that Tilak deliberately avoided speaking on the fine points of law that could have helped him get off the hook. Instead, he used his speech to demonstrate that the Government connived at the Anglo-Indian press, who were really to blame for hurting the feelings of the masses and thereby inciting them against the Government (Phatak, 1999, p. 279). In other words, Tilak used his trial as yet another opportunity for propaganda, rather than trying to save himself from the clutches of the law. When asked to make a final statement before his sentencing, Tilak famously uttered the following words with courage and unshaken confidence:

> All I wish to say is that, in spite of the verdict of the jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things, and, it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free (Karandikar, 1957, p. 322).

In any case, the court sentenced Tilak to six years of 'transportation'—a euphemism for exile from his country, and sent him to a jail in Mandaly in Burma, now called Myanmar. Although he was given some special privileges in the jail, such as having a convict from his province to cook his meals, the weather was very hot, muggy and dusty, and the overall conditions of the jail were injurious to health. People expected such treatment of their popular leader at the hand of the government, and there was widespread public unrest in the city of Mumbai in

anticipation of a negative verdict. As the case was drawing to a close, over 35,000 workers from a couple dozen mills in Mumbai went on strike. This strike, along with widespread public support of the strikers, firmly established Tilak's reputation as a leader of the masses. Once the moderate leaders had derisively called him a leader of the lower castes,[14] and now the masses proved that Tilak had an enormous following that the moderates could never dream of. Indeed, there was strong nationwide reaction in response to Tilak's sentencing. The words he spoke in response to the sentencing provided further proof of his moral calibre and spiritual greatness. The thoughts expressed by Khadilkar in his editorial of Tilak's paper, *Kesari*, are worth noting as a sample of the public reaction. A paraphrase of the Marathi words he wrote would be as follows (Phatak,1999, p. 280):

> Tilak's words in the court were divinely inspired. He did not try to draw the court's attention to his old age and poor health. This is because, being in a state of a highly accomplished *yogī* (*yogārūḍha sthiti*), he had become unaware of his physical existence, and was concerned only about the future of his favourite political movement.

As is widely known, Tilak used his imprisonment in Mandalay to write the *Gītārahasya*, his famous commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā* aimed at explaining its essence, or secret (*rahasya*). He composed this scholarly work under highly adverse conditions, with no library at hand, and only the limited number of books he was allowed to use in the jail. Upon his release from Mandaly, the authorities held the manuscript to examine if it contained his usual brand of inflammatory words against the Government. Under these conditions, for some time after his return from the jail, the manuscript was presumed to have been either confiscated, or lost. When asked about it, Tilak calmly replied that the Government could not destroy his work, for the contents were still in his head and he could write the whole text down in a short time.

The publication of the *Gītārahasya* invited immediate reaction, favourable as well as highly critical. Notwithstanding his highly controversial conclusions, no one would doubt the scholarly excellence of this work. Aside from the deep knowledge of the traditional Indian philosophy and of the numerous commentaries on the *Gītā*, this work contained an in-depth comparison of the Indian approach to ethics with the philosophical scholarship of the West, including the works of Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Green, Spencer and other prominent thinkers. Tilak's biographer Tamhankar (1956, p. 204) quotes Tilak's own words in this matter: 'What I have done in *Gītārahasya* is to prove, by comparing the philosophy of the *Gītā* and the philosophy of the West, that ours, to put it at the lowest, is in no way inferior to theirs.'

Although the *Gītārahasya* was his *magnum opus*, it was by no means Tilak's first or only scholarly work. He had been active in serious scholarship despite his heavy involvement in political activity throughout his working life. His earlier works, the *Orion* and the *Arctic Home in the Vedas* had already earned him a solid international reputation as a serious scholar in the field of ancient Indian history and culture. Aside from this, he was known for his deep knowledge of

mathematics, astronomy, the Indian classics such as the epic *Mahābhārata*, and so on. He was also deeply involved in attempts to revise and harmonize the various calendars then in vogue in various communities among the Hindus.

Tilak was fifty-eight years old when he returned from Mandalay. Thus, he was past the normal retirement age, which was then commonly set at fifty-five. Naturally, he received friendly advice from many colleagues that he should retire from active political life. But instead of retiring, he quickly sprang back into action. He began his normal activities, such as writing in *Kesari* and *Mahratta*, giving lectures, meeting politicians, entertaining any odd person who would drop in anytime of the day or night for help or advice, and so on. There was an additional activity not common in earlier days, namely giving lectures on the *Gītā*, and responding to critics of his *Gītārahasya*. The national and political situation had now radically changed, for this was 1914 and the British Empire was deeply embroiled in World War I. Such an adversity of the enemy was an opportunity not to be missed by any patriotic Indian, much less by a consummate tactician like Tilak. He started using the newly founded Home Rule League as a national platform to seek increasing concessions from the Government. He interpreted the English term 'Home Rule'—commonly translated as '*svarāj*' in most Indian languages—to mean more and more political rights at all levels of government from local to national, leading to total independence from the British rule in the near future.

It is in one of his public lectures in support of the Home Rule movement that he spontaneously asserted that 'Home Rule is my birth right, and I WILL have it'.[15] These words became etched in the national psyche throughout India's struggle for freedom. In lecture after lecture his general strategy was to insist that he was not trying to replace British Sovereignty with an Indian ruler, but just the faltering bureaucrats with efficient Indians, citing every possible slip and misrule by any British officer. He tactfully compared the Sovereign with *Brahman*—an unchanging metaphysical principle that did not directly participate in running the daily affairs of the world. Thus, he suggested, he had no quarrel with the irreplaceable Sovereign, thereby implying his allegiance to the Crown. His quarrel, he explained, was only with the bureaucrats who ran the daily business and goofed quite often. These bureaucrats were not an integral part of the immutable principle of Sovereignty, but simply a part of the government machinery that was mutable—like the ever-changing *māyā* or *prakṛti*.

The bureaucrats were clearly replaceable, for the government transferred them every now and then. If so, why not replace the English officers with more competent Indians? Why import an inexperienced—and yet expensive—young Englishman of twenty-one years of age to be a district Collector, when more mature and experienced Indian officers were already employed and readily available at all levels at a much lower salary? After all, there were countless examples of Indians chosen by the government and successfully operating at various positions from bottom to top. Then why pay Rs 25,000 a month to the top bureaucrat, namely the Viceroy in Delhi, when he could be replaced with an equally competent Indian who would cost far less? Tilak used all kinds of ingenious arguments

in his speeches that continued to attract larger and larger audiences in villages and cities where he kept getting invited to lecture.

A golden opportunity to bargain for more rights came up in 1916 when the Empire wanted to recruit thousands of Indians to fight in the war in Europe. Tilak offered his unstinting support in recruiting soldiers, promising to recruit more men to the army than the Empire needed, including one of his own sons. He even offered to deposit a large sum of money toward a fine per each soldier short of the number he promised to recruit. But such support to the government would not be unconditional, as some moderate leaders had offered; it would come only at a price. He demanded in return for his efforts officers' positions to Indians commensurate with their qualifications and quality, as well as more rights to the public at every level of the government. Unlike in earlier days of his participation in national politics, he was now perceived as—and behaved like—a mature elderly statesman willing to make compromises and forge alliances. Thus, he tried to unite the moderates and the radicals within the National Congress, the latter having split from the main body since the meeting of the Congress in Surat, and since organized as a separate group under the Nationalist banner. As is widely known, it is at the Surat Congress that Tilak was joined by a young revolutionary from Bengal by the name of Arbind Ghose, who later became famous as Sri Aurobindo, a great sage and saint. Tilak's radical politics continued; at the annual meeting of the Congress in Lucknow in 1916, he tried to strike an accord between the Hindu and Muslim leaders—a significant effort in the right direction.

By the time of his sixtieth birthday on July 23rd 1916, Tilak had reached the pinnacle of his political career with unquestioned dominance recognized by friends as well as foes as the most influential leader of the Indian people. His increasingly popular and influential lectures were becoming a headache to the Government. Willingdon, the then Governor of the Bombay Province, ordered him to stop inciting the people again, and pay a large sum as surety for ceasing and desisting insidious activities. This action came with a specific reference to a couple of his speeches attended by scribes specially appointed by the Governor to record his lectures verbatim to help avoid legal wrangling over the words he used. Tilak went to court to contest the Governor's action, and won this case. This was the *third* case of sedition in his life.

It would have been a great surprise if Tilak's fame had not reached England as his reputation and influence continued to grow in leaps and bounds year after year. While occasional news about his political activities had been published in British newspapers, Sir Valentine Chirol, the foreign correspondent of the London Times, came to India in 1909 to study the political unrest in the British Raj. The Government provided access to its secret files and police records, for portraying Tilak in the darkest possible way was clearly in their interest. Chirol published a series of articles in the London Times, which were later put together as a book titled 'Indian unrest'. It is in these writings that Chirol coined the epithet 'Father of the Indian Unrest', which pithily describes Tilak's place in history. That Chirol's words were not a matter of journalistic flare but the authentic perception of the highest

officers of the Empire is shown by the following words of Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India: 'This is the only political figure,' said Montagu, 'whose influence on India is perhaps greater than that of all others' (quoted by Phatak, 1999, p. 384). Tilak saw Chirol's book the day after he returned from Mandalay. Soon he decided to file a libel suite against Chirol, as well as against Macmillan Company, the book's publishers.

In 1918, Tilak left India for London to fight the libel case against Chirol. Fighting this case was an expensive affair, given the long journey and the fat fees of British lawyers he had to engage. The long and short of the case is that Tilak lost it. Tilak's motivation in undertaking such a risky and costly project would seem questionable, especially given that it appeared to seek personal vindication rather than a fight for a public cause. Karandikar (1957, p. 564) quotes Tilak's own words from his letter to a close associate Khaparde, which throw some light on Tilak's views on this issue:

> I was rather surprised to find that the result of this [Chirol] case dejected you [Mr. Khaparde] so much. Well, we must take our reverses calmly…. It was a game. If we had succeeded, it would have given us some advantage, not in private life but in our public contest with the bureaucracy. We have failed, not through any fault or mistake of ours, but through the incapacity of the British Judge and Jury to distinguish between private character and political opinion of men. But this is, on its face, an eye opener to our people, and, let us now utilise it as such. So you see that any way we gain, provided we are not disheartened.

There was more to Tilak's trip to England than fighting a libel suit. He met a lot of politically important people in an attempt to find potential friends and sympathizers to the national cause. He took every opportunity to speak to British audiences, addressing mainly industrial workers who could be sympathetic to his criticisms of the bureaucracy. Any publicity of India's problems among the British subjects would be an advantage to the Indian cause. He also used his stay in England to pursue several other relevant goals, such as learning more about the latest printing technology for potential use in running his newspapers. In any case, the Chirol case turned out to be one of his major undertakings toward the end of his life. He died on 1 August 1920, at the age of sixty-four.

Understanding Tilak as a *karma-yogi*

The story of Tilak's life would normally look like that of a renowned politician rather than that of a *yogī*. Although his thoughts on spirituality are clearly explained in *Gītārahasya*, there are no first person accounts, whether diaries or autobiographical writings, available that would throw light on his own perspective on his *sādhanā*, that is, his spiritual quest. So we cannot avail ourselves of first person accounts of his experiences along the path of *karma yoga*, or of his spiritual attainments. In general, it is not common in the Indian tradition for persons to speak about their spiritual life except in the immediate circle of the guru and

fellow disciples. Moreover, as a politician Tilak had little by way of private life; his life was an open book. There are only a few second-person accounts by persons near to him, which are considered below, and there are not many third-person accounts either. Despite volumes, especially biographical works, written on the life of Tilak, it is not easy to find writings that examine his life and work as a spiritual aspirant. An extensive search through the catalogue of works on Tilak collected at the office of *Kesari*, the newspaper that he founded and is now run by his great grandson, led but to a single short work in Marathi that deals exclusively on the issue of spirituality in Tilak's life (Vidwans, 1926/1945). In spite of its explicit focus on the topic of spirituality, this book is of little help in answering such pertinent questions as the identity of his guru, the nature of his spiritual practices (*sādhanā*), or an estimate of the result of the level of success in his spiritual enterprise.

Most of Tilak's biographers stress his political activities and successes therein, and rare ones such as Phatak try to critically assess his political and social work. Some articles published in the context of his birth centenary in 1956 make some valuable points. A good example of this is an article by S.D. Pendse, a noted Marathi scholar, which presents a perspective on Tilak's thoughts on ethics and spirituality as reflected in the latter's *Gītārahasya* (Pendse, 1956). Pendse points out that, in Tilak's opinion, the origin of all ethical norms must be found in the highest spiritual attainment of a human being. According to the Vedānta system, the highest spiritual attainment of a human being is *mokṣa* (liberation). While Vedānta implies pure spirituality, ethics are simply its practical aspect. Thus, from Tilak's viewpoint, spirituality and ethics are but two aspects of the system of Vedānta. Pendse points to a long sentence from *Gītārahasya* as indicative of the essence of Tilak's life and teaching. The sentence is long-winded and hard to translate. Its purport may be paraphrased as follows, 'Ideally a person should attain inner calm by purging the mind of all desires through the realization of the identity between the Self and Brahman. One should thereby attain equanimity, and malice toward none. Upon attainment of such a state, one should set an example for others through one's own behaviour, and help everyone around oneself in attaining spiritual progress.' According to Pendse, this is what Tilak preached, and that is what he successfully practiced throughout his life.

It is interesting to note that the sentences Pendse chooses to help understand the essence of Tilak's life are taken from his chapter on the behaviour of a self-realized person in the *Gītārahasya*. As explained in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (2.54-72), a self-realized person attains a dynamically stable intellect *(sthita-prajña*) that reflects equanimity and inner calm that enables such a person to face the gravest crises without being ruffled by negative emotions. Are there any indications in Tilak's life that he had attained such a state? S. B. Belvi (2004) suggests an answer to this question in his short recent biography of Tilak. He points first to Tilak's involvement in the Tāī Mahārāj case, which dragged on for over twenty-three years and drained his financial and other resources when he needed them the most. The allegations, innuendo and gossip arising from this case raised suspicions about his personal character and public involvement in a way that would have been

personally painful, as well as injurious to the many causes for which he fought in public interest. Tilak went through this ordeal calmly regardless of the many reverses and nagging moments. His only motive in facing the situation was to perform his duties following from promises to a friend. There are several other instances of Tilak's exceptionally stable emotional disposition.

While waiting to hear the result of his first trial on the serious charge of sedition, Tilak's friends broke down in anticipation of the bad news. Indeed, Tilak went to sleep as usual while his friends had literally lost their sleep. After waking up he made casual remarks and joked despite the sombre mood of those around. Similarly, while waiting for the result of the second sedition trial in 1908, a friend said that Tilak would soon be taken to the jail. In response Tilak casually remarked, 'What difference would that make? The British have already turned the whole nation into a prison. All they will do is to send me to a different cell in the same prison' (Belvi, 2004, p. 41). There were also instances in his life where an ordinary person would break down with grief, but Tilak remained unmoved. Thus, in 1903 when his eldest college-going son Vishwanath succumbed to the plague, his son-in-law Ketkar stood speechless in front of him. Tilak broke the silence saying, 'Is it not natural, after all, that we would lose some firewood of our own when the whole town is up in flames?' A couple of years later, someone informed Tilak that his second son was seriously ill. Tilak instructed his attendants not to distract him with such news from home until the tasks on hand, namely the celebrations at Shivaji's fort, were complete. He could attend domestic issues only after his public responsibilities were taken care of. In another instance, when his youngest son, Waman, died at a very young age, he asked his nephew not to wake up the infant's mother from sleep; she would come to know what has happened soon anyways.

Such instances should not be interpreted to mean heartlessness, indifference or emotional shallowness. It did not seem to be his style to express his tender emotions, although he was very sensitive to the needs of his family and earnest in fulfilling them. This is well expressed in his letters from Mandalay written to his nephew who was the family's caregiver in his absence. These letters are full of the minutest details of things that needed to be done for every family member; only a highly emotionally sensitive person could think of such details while himself suffering from diabetes and a host of other health problems under the harsh conditions of a jail. In one such letter that he wrote after hearing the death of his wife of forty-one years, he expressed his deep frustration for not being there to take care of her during her last illness. That Tilak was a man of boundless compassion was expressed in his day-to-day behaviour. His doors were always open to anyone who sought his help, no matter how busy he would be with one thing after another. It was quite common for people to knock on his door—without an appointment or formality at anytime in day or night—for any odd mundane matter, most commonly free legal advice in court cases of all types.

What kind of spiritual practices did Tilak follow to help attain emotional equanimity and boundless compassion? Whose guidance did he follow? Such

questions are not easily answered on the basis of the large amount of biographical information that is available. Although it is widely believed that Tilak thought of Shri Aṇṇāsāheb Patwardhan as his guru, there are no indications to confirm a clear guru-disciple relationship between the two men from either Tilak's many biographies, or from Patwardhan's (see Aprabuddha, 1926). There is no indication in Tilak's biographies suggesting that he may have followed any step-wise procedure explained in texts of Yoga or Vedānta. It is important here to understand that Tilak primarily—although not exclusively—followed *karma yoga*, which does not have a step-wise procedure to follow, or a series of markers of progress, like those described in Patañjali's *yoga*. Tilak's own exposition of *karma yoga* does not lay down any steps to follow. The reasons for the lack of a well-defined procedure to follow in the practice of *karma yoga* should not be difficult to understand. It should be clear that the basic principle of *karma yoga* is to keep doing the duties appropriate to one's station in life without clamouring for success. Given that each person finds himself in relatively unique social and historical situations, he must devise appropriately unique solutions to the challenges unfolding in life. Although one could and should be guided by some general principles, such as refraining from injury to any life (*ahiṁsā*), there are situations where such principles cannot be followed. Indeed, the *Gītā*, while fully recognizing the importance of the principle of *ahiṁsā*, tries to convince Arjuna that it is imperative that he ought to fight a war against his own cousins and other close relatives.

Tilak argues in *Gītārahasya* (in Chapter 2, called *Karmajijñāsā*) that, given the complexities of practical life, one cannot expect to be guided by a fixed set of *very specific* moral principles uniformly applied to a myriad of highly complex situations. There are situations where one moral principle clashes with another principle requiring skilful compromises between the two. This should be clear to students of moral behaviour in modern psychology, given the famous examples in Kohlberg's research on moral dilemmas. Thus, in a popular case presented by Kohlberg (1981), Heinz, the fictitious hero of a story, was faced with the prospect of having to steal a drug to save his sick wife because he could not afford an excessively high priced medicine from a greedy pharmacist. Under such circumstances, Heinz is required to think of some higher principles that would help justify stealing. In *Gītārahasya* Tilak cites numerous such examples of moral dilemmas often taken from the epic *Mahābhārata* and other well-known Indian classics. Given the commonness of such dilemmas in human life, each person is doomed to device resolutions to unpredictable and often unique situations presented in the course of life. Tilak was born in a specific historical context where he and millions of his compatriots had to face an exploitative rule by one of the most powerful empires in the history of the world. Fighting against it was a historical need of his times, and Tilak used his considerable talents and fine moral sensitivities to justify such a fight. He did not in principle rule out killing as a justifiable action under appropriate circumstances. In this regard he differed from Mahatma Gandhi, his junior contemporary, who advocated *ahiṁsā* at all costs. Alas, Gandhi's best disciples could not afford to follow *ahiṁsā*; in a short time of after the Mahatma's death,

they marched Indian armies to protect India's interests in Kashmir, Hyderabad, and Goa.

Although quite aggressive in his political life, Tilak was not a soldier by temperament, but rather an intellectual. He often used to say that, had he been born in different historical circumstances, he would have preferred to be a mathematics professor. But he could not afford the luxury of such a choice since he felt compelled to take a line of work such as journalism that would be more appropriate for the task of opposing a mighty empire. Regardless of the demands of an active political life, he remained tirelessly engaged in intellectual pursuits of the highest standards of scholarship. Given such a strong intellectual aptitude, he could be expected to choose the path of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*) toward his spiritual development. He did in fact study the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta very deeply, and meticulously followed its principles advocating the path of knowledge. Indeed it would be fair to say that, despite his advocacy of *karma yoga* as the best among the many pathways to *mokṣa*, he was in fact a *jñāna yogī*. Tilak's writings make no secret of his admiration for Śaṅkara, the great exponent of Advaita. However, as noted in the previous section, he disagreed with the followers of Śaṅkara who insisted that knowledge is the *only* means to liberation (*jñānādeva tu kaivalyam*). Tilak openly advocated a combination of knowledge and action (*jñāna-karma-samuccaya*) as the most appropriate means to liberation (*mokṣa*). Such disagreement with the great master invited the strongest criticism from some of Śaṅkara's staunch followers of his time. In his biography of Tilak, Phatak (1999, pp. 356–366) gives several instances of serious debates with erudite and serious followers of Śaṅkara's philosophy, as well as comic situations of farcical diatribes in public meetings by self-appointed defenders of Śaṅkara.

The roots of Tilak's disagreement with Śaṅkara lie in his early youth. As Tilak's biographers point out (for example, Phatak, 1999, p. 8), and Tilak himself notes in his preface to *Gītārahasya*, he was only 16 years old when he had a serious encounter with the *Bhagavad Gītā* when his ailing father asked him to read aloud an old commentary on the *Gītā*. It is at that time that he thought that, given that the main thrust of the *Gītā* was to convince Arjuna to fight a fratricidal war, it would be odd indeed to conclude, as Śaṅkara did, that it preached renunciation from active life. Following this, decades of serious study led him to conclude that the *Gītā*'s main teaching favoured active participation in life's challenges, not renunciation. It is only in regard to the relative importance of action in comparison to knowledge that Tilak's position differs from Śaṅkara's. There was no doubt whatever in Tilak's mind about the importance of the realization of the identity of the Self with Brahman. On that issue, Tilak and Śaṅkara are one. More specifically, Tilak wrote repeatedly about the need for action *after* self-realization (*jñānottara karma*). He writes with such conviction about the identity of the Self (*Ātman*) with *Brahman* that his words appear to follow from a direct experience of this identity. However, there are no external means to assert if he, or anyone for that matter, had a direct experience of self-realization in a higher state of consciousness.

Although it seems fair to say that Tilak successfully travelled the path of

knowledge (*jñāna mārga*) to its rightful destination, what can we say about his possible involvement in *dhyāna yoga* and *bhakti yoga*? There are some references in the biographical material that indicate the possibility that he regularly, and likely intensely, practiced concentrative meditation (*dhyāna*). The collection of reminiscences and anecdotes about Tilak provide some clues in this matter. For instance, according to a reminiscence recorded by his son Ramachandra, Tilak spoke to his children about the importance of concentration of one's mind as a key to success in life. He spoke not only about concentrating one's mind, but also about emptying one's mind of all thoughts—and thereby attaining *Samādhi*. Further, according to the son's report, Tilak specifically mentioned that, as many persons around him must have noticed, he often sat for hours on end in his easy chair oblivious to what was happening around him. Tilak indicated that at such times he used to reach high levels of concentration, although he would not say—and nobody would ever know—if he experienced *Samādhi* at any level (Tilak & Dhavale, 1992, p. 19)[16]. A similar indication of Tilak's practice of concentrative meditation (*dhyāna*) is found in the reminiscences of Kulkarni, the convict who was appointed as Tilak's cook in the Mandalay prison. Kulkarni mentions that it was Tilak's daily practice to sit in his bed after waking up every morning for about an hour and a half—apparently absorbed in deep meditation (Tilak & Dhavale, 1992, p. 78).

Reports of regular meditation for one or two hours every day completely conform to his expressed views in this matter that were noted earlier. While such practice of *dhyāna yoga* was clearly part of his overall spiritual practice (*sādhanā*), there is little if any indication in the biographical materials about his reliance on devotion (*bhakti*). Although Tilak actively promoted the celebration of the annual festival of god Gaṇeśa, he appears to have thought of such worship more as means to unite the worshippers than as means to self-realization in his own case. The clear impression of his personality given in the biographies indicates that he was not by nature an emotionally highly sensitive person. This makes him not a natural candidate for the practice of *bhakti yoga*. In this respect, Tilak stands in sharp contrast with Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa, whose high emotional sensitivity was manifest from early childhood. In his article on the occasion of Tilak's birth centenary, Mahādevśāstrī Divekar (1956) throws some light on the place of *bhakti* in Tilak's spiritual life. In Divekar's view, there comes a point in the life of every person, whether he is a *karma yogi, jñāna yogi, or a bhakti yogi*, when he totally surrenders to God. He points out that in the speeches Tilak made in his last lecture tour in support of the Home Rule League, there are frequent references to God's Will. According to Divekar, Tilak's attitudes in this matter are consistent with his views about *bhakti* expressed in the *Gītārahasya* where he advocates performing action without egotism, without hankering for rewards, and with total faith in God. Divekar notes that Tilak makes a reference to the will of Providence in his famous words upon being sentenced to six years of exile in Mandalay. In other words, Tilak's attitude of surrender to God's will apparently intensified toward the end of his life.

Divekar offers an interesting perspective in regard to the connection between

love of God and love of motherland in Tilak's life. According to this perspective, which he points out to be a traditional one in Indian thought, there is a continuum from individuality through collectivity to Divinity (*vyaṣṭi, samaṣṭi*, and *parameṣṭi*). Thus, individualistic self-love may be transformed into love for the all-encompassing Divine by successively expanding its limits to increasingly expanding in-groups. This approach to the successive expansion of ego-boundaries helps make sense of Tilak's legendary quip that he viewed his love for the motherland as but a measure of his love for God. Tilak's deep involvement in his family, with his city where he was a councillor for some time, his devotion to his profession of journalism, his deep love for his language expressed in his choice of Marathi as the language of his magnum opus, his pride for Hindu religion and philosophy, and most of all his intense nationalism, all indicate that he practiced exactly what he preached.

Here one may pause to examine why Tilak seems to stop short of working for the whole of humanity, as if arrested in his spiritual growth beyond the point of nationalism. A possible answer to this is that, born in a historical era of subjugation under an exploitative foreign rule, fighting for national freedom had to be the highest priority. Moreover, as noted earlier, he explicitly mentions in *Gītārahasya* that it is most legitimate for a nation to take up arms against another nation that politically dominates and exploits it. Had he been born under different circumstances, he might have been a *jñāna yogi* working hard in the service of the whole of humankind. This would of course be pure speculation, and not a testable hypothesis, and may be left at that.

Endnotes

1 The author wishes to thank Matthijs Cornelissen, R. K. Naidu, Ashok Nirpharake, Namita Pande, Sunand Sane and Shankar Talghatti for their helpful suggestions and comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

2 For an English translation of the *Gītārahasya*, see B. C. Sukthankar (1936/1971).

3 Tilak knew Sri Aurobindo personally; indeed they were close colleagues in radical national politics. However, given that Tilak wrote *Gītārahasya* while in prison in Mandalay from 1908–1914, he could not have known about Sri Aurobindo's writings on the *Veda* which were published during the 1914-1920 period. It is conceivable that Tilak (1856-1920), a well-known scholar of the *Vedas*, may have been aware of the deeper, mystical implications of the *Veda* either on his own, or through his senior or junior contemporaries like Dayānanda Sarasvati (1824-1883) or Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950). However, it is clear that Tilak's discussion of the *Vedic karma kāṇḍa* is entirely addressed to its interpretation in the Mīmāṁsā system of Jaimini and others.

4 Jaimini's words are: *codanā lakṣaṇo artho dharmaḥ*|. See Jaimini's *Mīmāṁsā Sūtra* (1.1.2); Jaimini (n.d./1984).

5 Karl Potter (1964) has pointed out that the Law of Karma is assumed as a foundational assumption in Indian thought in a way similar to the assumption of

causality in modern science. Both are presumed to be true without demanding empirical proof (that is, as *a priori* principles); they presume lawfulness of events in respectively moral and physical spheres and thereby provide direction to inquiry within respective spheres of inquiry. Systematic study of events in any sphere would be meaningless unless we assume an inexorable orderliness of events in that sphere; to make sense of any inquiry, we need to *presume* the universe is cosmos, not chaos.

6 Paraphrased by the author of this essay. The words in the *Gītā* (4.37) are:

yathai'dhāṁsi samiddho'gnir

bhasmasat kurute'rjuna

jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi

bhasmasat kurute tathā

7 Tilak (1915/1998, p. 274) uses the Marathi words *hāv*, *āgraha*, and the Marathi/Sanskrit word *āsakti* in this context. It is not easy to accurately convey all the shades of meaning through exact English equivalents.

8 For a modern psychological perspective on the issue of concentric loyalties, see Allport (1954/1958, p. 42).

9 For Tilak's views on the temptations in *haṭha yoga* practice to seek extra-ordinary powers or to learn tricks of black magic for evil purposes, see his comments on *Gītā*, 6.15 in the *Gītārahasya*.

10 This discussion is in Chapter 10, titled '*karmavipaka va ātmasvātantrya*', meaning the consequences of action and free will.

11 Bādarāyaṇa's words in 2.3.33 are '*kartā śāstrārthavattvāt*'. Swami Gambhirananda (1972, p. 494) translates these words as follows: 'The individual soul must be agent, for thus alone the scriptures become purposeful.' What is implied here is the idea that if one denies free will or human agency, then the scriptural injunctions for right action become meaningless. The argument here is similar to Immanuel Kant's famous words, 'ought implies can'; there is no point in expecting that a man should have helped a lady in distress when his hands were tied by a burglar.

12 The other three prescribed goals are *dharma*, or doing one's duties appropriate to one's station in social life, *artha* meaning the acquisition of wealth, and *mokṣa* meaning liberation of the self.

13 It is difficult to convey the stinging sense of the original Marathi words, which were, '*sarkārace ḍoke ṭhikāṇāvar āhe kāya*?' (Kelkar, 1928/1988, p. 544).

14 The Marathi expression was that he was '*telyā tāmboḷyānce puḍhārī*', which named a couple of 'lower' castes among his followers, thereby implying that he was incapable of leading the upper castes or the 'classes'.

15 The original Marathi words are, '*svarājya hā majhā janmasiddha hakka āhe, āṇi to mī miḷavaṇārac*'. The author of this essay has translated the insistence and emphasis implied in the letter 'c' added to the ending verb '*miḷavaṇāra*' with the word 'will' in capital letters.

16 This book edited by Tilak and Dhavale is an abridged version of the original book of reminiscences and anecdotes compiled by S.V. Bapat in the 1920s.

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21

From dejection to action: A narrative analysis of the transformation of Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira

Kavita A. Sharma

Conflicts of various kinds constitute an important aspect of the human condition. In everyday life people are frequently put in situations where the choice between available options becomes difficult. In psychological literature, such conflicts are categorized in terms of positive and negative vectors associated with the options. Accordingly a typology of conflicts is created, that is, positive–positive, positive–negative, and negative–negative. Continued or chronic conflicts often become sources of stress and maladjustment. The existential conditions of the modern world pose the challenge before us to analyse the conflicts and exercise our choice wisely, so that we may avoid the negative effects, grow and realize our potential. In this endeavour, the model of man becomes very important as it plays a decisive role in choosing our position while perceiving our problems, and responding to them. Individuals are, over and over again, confronted with choices that lead to ethical dilemmas as they perceive them, and there is consequent confusion in action. Such dilemmas leave us groping, divided and bewildered, and so always in a state of stress or dejection. A dilemma arises when the person who has to act, is committed to two or more moral obligations, and he cannot fulfil one without violating his duty to another.

The *Mahābhārata*[1] explains to ordinary persons, in the simple form of stories, how the ancient personages behaved in the numerous difficult circumstances they had to confront in the course of their lives. It presents situations where imperfect people have to act in an imperfect world; where everything has shades of grey. In the story the most difficult moment of choice is found in the case of Arjuna who was duty-bound to fight in the war where the enemies were his own kith and kin.

The key dilemma

The choice was difficult and Lord Kṛṣṇa had to counsel Arjuna at that juncture. After the counsel, Arjuna undergoes a self-transformation and recognizes his true

nature. The Lord's teachings, which are in the form of descriptions and directions for undergoing the various kinds of *yoga*, form the part of the text called the *Śrī Bhagavad Gītā*.

In fact, 'What shall I do?, 'How shall I act?', are the questions that confront the protagonists of the *Mahābhārata* at every turn of their lives, as they do us. The fratricidal war between the *Kauravas* and the *Pāṇḍavas*, for the throne of Hastināpura, is pivotal to the *Mahābhārata*. The Kurukṣetra war is hedged in on either side by the breakdown of the two chief protagonists—Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira. The biggest dilemma is that of Arjuna at the beginning of the battle of Kurukṣetra. All, including Arjuna, are aware that the war would lead to massive destruction and devastation in which the entire family would be involved and face annihilation. Yet they go into it with eyes open, but of course each of the chief protagonists has a different motive or perception, apart from the common cause or aim.

Arjuna, as he confronts the two armies, is filled with despair and paralysed in action. After the war, Yudhiṣṭhira is overwrought with despair, and refuses to accept the throne of Hastināpura for which the war itself was fought. He finds it impossible to escape his share of the guilt for the carnage. Both find themselves unable to act. Thus initially Arjuna collapses, and, at the end, Yudhiṣṭhira. They attempt to adopt an apparently high moral ground that seems utterly rational, convincing and ethical to justify their positions, and thus try to escape the more difficult path of action.

The path of the *Gītā*

Arjuna's dilemma is the supreme ethical dilemma. Similarly the extreme anguish of Yudhiṣṭhira at the carnage caused by the war, and his inability to ascend a blood-soaked throne, are real and entirely comprehensible. It cannot be forgotten that Yudhiṣṭhira must feel particularly guilty, as he blames himself for it. Whatever may have been his justification for playing the game of dice—it is part of *rājasūya yajña*; he cannot refuse the invitation of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana, especially when Vidura is the carrier of it. He cannot annoy his cousins in view of Vyāsa's prophecy of an extremely destructive war between them, which he wants to avoid at all costs—he cannot escape the responsibility of staking his brothers and Draupadī. He should have known when to stop. The guilt of the difficulties of the thirteen years in the forest and the war itself, must weigh down heavily upon him. Draupadī and Bhīmasena also repeatedly point out his culpability to him. Yudhiṣṭhira wants to do penance for his mistakes and the hardships that they have caused, but he does not realize that the greatest penance that he can do is to accept his responsibility, rather than escape it, and rule over Hastināpura. However, his despondency has first to be transformed into a frame of mind where he can accept this and act with equanimity.

Equanimity in life

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's teachings to Arjuna are nothing short of preparing the human warrior

to fight the battle of life with equanimity. As Lokmanya Tilak (2000) points out, the very first advice of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna is that it is not proper to give up action because numerous difficulties arise in the consideration of what should be done and what should not be done. For Tilak, the subject matter of the *Gītā* is to show whether or not there are any means of ascertaining what course to follow when a person is beset by ethical dilemmas, and by what means to resolve them. The word *karma* as he says, comes from the root '*kṛ*' which means 'doing' 'affairs' or activity and *yoga*, in this context, means some special skill, device, intelligent method or graceful way of performing actions. This is because all methods of *yoga* given in the *Gītā* are not for the ascetic, but for one who continues to perform actions in this world so that he can do them in an equitable frame of mind.

Motivational transformation

In motivating Arjuna to act, Śrī Kṛṣṇa presents to him the most detailed exposition of *karma yoga*, the *yoga* of action, which can only be performed through true knowledge (*jñāna*), and devotion (*bhakti*). The transformation is essentially a psychological one, as it changes the way the protagonist views the situation, the action that he thinks he has to perform, and the motivation behind that action, so that the suffering or its perception is minimized, accepted as justified or sublimated. Sri Aurobindo (1999, pp. 621–622) explains that:

> [A]ll action of the mind or inner instrument arises out of this chitta or basic consciousness, partly conscient, partly sub conscient or subliminal to our active mentality. When it is struck by the world's impacts from outside or urged by the reflective powers of the subjective inner being, it throws up certain habitual activities, the mould of which has been determined by our evolution. One of these forms of activity is the emotional mind, — the heart, as we may call it for the sake of a convenient brevity. Our emotions are the waves of reaction and response which rise up from the basic consciousness, cittavrtti. Their action too is largely regulated by habit and an emotive memory. They are not imperative, not laws of Necessity…we are not obliged to give responses of grief to certain impacts upon the mind, responses of anger to others, to yet others responses of hatred or dislike, to others responses of liking or love. All these things are only habits of our affective mentality; they can be changed by the conscious will of the spirit; they can be inhibited; we may even rise entirely above all subjection to grief, anger, hatred, the duality of liking and disliking…and yet the true emotive soul, the real psyche in us, is not a desire-soul, but a soul of pure love and delight; but that, like the rest of our true being, can only emerge when the deformation created by the life of desire is removed from the surface and is no longer the characteristic action of our being. To get that done is a necessary part of our purification, liberation, perfection.

Yoga as psychology

The basic problem faced by humanity is the search for an answer to the question

of mental and spiritual suffering, which is inevitable. Therefore all living beings strive for freedom from suffering (*duḥkha nivṛtti*). This involves four related issues. One is *heya* or the real nature of *duḥkha*. The second is *heya hetu* or the real cause of suffering. The third is *hāna* or what is the condition when there is complete absence of suffering. And the fourth is *hānopāya* or what are the means or methods of achieving the complete absence of suffering. In examining these questions, three ontological categories are postulated. One is *cetana-tattva*, *puruṣa* or *jīva* or the life principle. The questions are: Who suffers? What is the nature of the one who suffers? Is suffering its natural property? The argument is that once one is face to face with this real Self, there is complete absence of suffering or '*hāna*'.

The second is *jaḍa-tattva* or inert matter, *prakṛti*. Suffering originates in it and is its necessary attribute. Not being able to distinguish between this inert matter and the life principle is the cause of suffering. Therefore, attaining the discriminating knowledge to distinguish between the two is the means of putting an end to suffering or *hānopāya*.

The third is the *cetana-tattva* or the great Self which is called by various names like *paramātmā*, *īśvara* and *brahman*. This is the goal of the individual self. When one becomes one with this, the individual self becomes independent of the inert matter and thus immune to suffering (Sri Aurobindo, 1999, pp. 38-39).

The *Gītā* argues that the root of all suffering and discord is the agitation of mind caused by desire. The only way to douse the flame of desire is by stilling the mind through disciplining the senses and the intellect. However, this does not mean abstinence from action as that is just as detrimental as extreme indulgence. According to the *Gītā*, the goal of life is to free the mind and the intellect from their complexities and to focus them on the glory of the Self by dedicating one's actions to the Divine. This goal can be achieved through the *yogas* of meditation, action, devotion and knowledge. These four major kinds of *yoga* are: *rāja yoga* or psycho-physical meditation, *bhakti yoga* or devotion, *karma yoga* or selfless action, and *jñāna yoga* or self-transcending knowledge. Then there is the most popularly known *yoga* of the physical body, or the *haṭha yoga*. '*Yoga*' Sri Aurobindo (1999, p. 44) points out, 'is nothing but practical psychology.' Its aim is self-perfection by a methodized effort so that the latent potentialities of a human being can be brought to light and perfected. This is done by the union of the individual with the universal and transcendent existence which is partially expressed in man and in the cosmos.

Yoga then, is primarily a change of the inner consciousness and nature. People are not so much disturbed by the things that happen to them but by the way they view them. The processes of cognition, emotion and behaviour are interdependent. Therefore emotions and actions can be modified by rectifying the errors in thinking and language. Conflicts arise because human beings have a tendency to not only think irrationally but also to convert their strong preferences into absolutistic demands. This is because of their perception of themselves as right and their inability to see any other point of view. For example, a person may be unhappy that his son does not obey him and convert that into an absolute value

without realizing that the extent of obedience being demanded by him is probably unrealistic. Human beings also have the power to step back and view their own thoughts and then to choose to work towards changing their irrational thinking. Once the ground has been prepared, they can actively and continuously work towards changing their own perceptions.

It must be remembered that while the *Gītā* presents the triune path, it foregrounds the path of action and not of renunciation. Kṛṣṇa's injunction to Arjuna is quite clear; conquer the kingdom and enjoy it, not renounce it. That is why, later Yudhiṣṭhira has to be similarly motivated to rule over Hastināpura with his brothers, and not leave it. Arjuna himself is unambiguous in his request to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, 'Do not confuse me by placing before me several courses of conduct, but point out to me definitely only one course, which is the proper course.' Śrī Kṛṣṇa is trying to motivate Arjuna to act, by making him see the situation from a totally different perspective from the one he is viewing it through.

Initially, Arjuna is overconfident. He asks Śrī Kṛṣṇa to take him to the middle of the battlefield between the two opposing forces because he wants to teach the *Kauravas* a lesson. However, he gets caught in a dilemma himself. The enormity of the situation acts as a blow delivered at the very centre of his sensational, vital and emotional being. He reaches a state bordering on the virtual collapse of his entire being—physical, psychological and physiological. He cannot even stand, overcome as he is by great fear and confusion. The psychological stress manifests as palpitation of the heart, profuse perspiration, trembling of limbs, drying up of the tongue, parching of the throat, tears in the eyes and dizziness. The bow slips and falls to the ground. The moral sense awakens to justify the revolt of the sensations and emotions. It is a sin it tells him. How can mutual slaughter be right and just. His action would be a violation of the most sacred feelings and nothing could be a more heinous crime. Similarly, Yudhiṣṭhira at the end of the war is in a state of utter despair. He cannot bear the destruction that has been caused and he condemns himself in the strongest terms possible.

It is interesting that Yudhiṣṭhira should say this at the end of the war because unlike Arjuna, he faced no such qualms at the beginning. He was convinced that the war was happening in spite of him and not because of him. On the face of it, therefore, both Arjuna and Yudhiṣṭhira are wise men who appear to be speaking both rationally and ethically. Kṛṣṇa's teachings to Arjuna in the battlefield are the most outstanding example of how the psyche can be transformed and a changed perspective lead to a radically different action. Similar arguments are used later to persuade Yudhiṣṭhira but the exposition is not as compact or cogent. The teaching of the *Gītā* is a part of life and presents the inner conflicts and dilemmas that an individual faces, and how he can grapple with them

Ignorance: The challenge of understanding reality

The *Gītā* gives the individual the necessary strength to act by revealing the hidden and underlying reality of the situation. Kṛṣṇa not only changes the cognitive

paradigms of Arjuna as he motivates him to act, but takes the process even further to spiritualize it. He uses the dialectic method in approaching the question of the individual in the universe, his situation in life and the various problems and conflicts that surround him. It is an educative process of bringing the individual soul from the state of wrong understanding, a state of mixed up interior, a state of confusion, into a higher state of right understanding, clarity of perception and vision, and a very clear interior.

Arjuna refuses to fight saying they are all his kinsmen and those whom he reveres. As though he had not known all along that the opposing *Kaurava* forces were his relatives! Similarly, Yudhiṣṭhira refuses to ascend the throne saying that he finds every grain to be drenched in the blood of those bound by the most intimate and sacred ties to him, and whom he has caused to be killed. Again, it isn't as if Yudhiṣṭhira did not know whom he was fighting and whom he was killing. Arjuna is driven to fight by the egoism of his strength as a *kṣatriya*. He is repelled from the battle later, by the contrary egoism of weakness. His spirit shrinks and a false pity overcomes him. He says he would much rather be a mendicant and live by begging, than rule over a kingdom won by the bloodshed of his relatives.

Arjuna's laying aside his *gāṇḍīva* and refusing to battle should ordinarily be considered a shining example of renunciation but Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not deceived by it. He rebukes him by terming his words as weakness, delusion and egoism. He tells him to open his eyes to the true knowledge of the situation and to purify his soul of egoism.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa chides Arjuna because he sees him in a state of ignorance and confusion. It is not true renunciation but faint-heartedness, impotence full of a weak self-pity, recoil from the mental suffering that would be caused by fighting. As Sri Aurobindo points out, it is ignoble because the apparent pity for others is also a form of self-indulgence, a physical shrinking of the nerves from having to perform the act of slaughter, the egoistic emotional cringing of the heart from the destruction of the *Kauravas* because they are 'one's own people' and without them life will be empty. Therefore, it is weakness and not compassion, which motivates Arjuna. It is not the path for the developed man who must not be allowed to give in to weakness, but must grow from strength to strength. Arjuna has been chosen by the Divine to do a particular act. It is after all Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is his charioteer. It is not for him to escape his duty but to do it as an instrument of the Divine, with equanimity of heart. Up to this moment, Arjuna has followed the current standards of action. It is his *kṣatriya dharma* that has led him to a hideous chaos where his emotions and morality are in conflict with each other, and into a situation where he finds no moral standing-ground.

Removal of ignorance

Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa sees ignorance as the root cause of Arjuna's reaction, he first sets about removing it. Arjuna, he says, is deluded. He thinks he is going to kill someone but who can kill whom. These people whom he regards as mortal beings are

really imperishable and eternal. Weapons cannot injure them, fire cannot burn them, water cannot wet them and wind cannot dry them. They are unborn, eternal, beyond time. How can they be killed and who can kill them. One who claims as much is ignorant. The Reality never ceases to be and the unreal is only an appearance. Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that Arjuna has to first rid himself of *ajñāna* or *avidyā*. For this, he must first become aware of it. Arjuna is a warrior and not a seer. Hence, eventually Śrī Kṛṣṇa has to show him his '*virāṭ rūpa*' in which he sees not only the divinity of Kṛṣṇa but also the paradoxical nature of time. All have already been killed and yet all are eternal. This is because time is transitory and Time is eternal. Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes him realize that running away from action is not going to solve his problem. He must see things clearly and in the right perspective. The real question is not of his action or inaction. The wise know that there is a third way, which is the right and proper way—that of wisdom filled action.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa now points out a physical and psychological truth. All creatures, whether they desire or not, must act. It is in the very nature of life on earth and of the human individual, that all are driven to activity. We are all a part of the Cosmic Nature or *prakṛti* that has brought manifestation into being and she contains within Herself this impulse to action. Thus, action is inevitable. She is the mechanical executive force although instinct with an Absolute Intelligence or *puruṣa*. Nature as *prakṛti* is the Force that works out the movements imposed on her but all the while within her is the one that knows, although inactive, that is the *puruṣa*. He gives sanction to *prakṛti's* works but does not himself execute. Sri Aurobindo points out that this is the distinction maintained by the Sāṁkhya and although it may not be seen as the highest truth by all, it is still a useful, valid and indispensable practical knowledge in the lower sphere of existence.

The individual soul or the conscious being may identify itself with the experiencing *puruṣa* or with the active *prakṛti*. If the latter, it is not master, knower, or the enjoyer but reflects the modes and workings of *prakṛti*. It is in the very nature of things that man has an incomplete, hampered and baffled ascension towards the true character of the *puruṣa*, who is the free master, knower and enjoyer. *Prakṛti* works in the human and earthly experience through the *guṇas* or the relative modes—*sāttvic, rājasic,* and *tāmasic*. None gives its single and absolute fruit because all are intermixed with each other. It is their confused and inconstant interaction that determines the experiences of the egoistic human consciousness and limits it. It results in a constant inequality of the mind and heart, confusion and disharmony in the varied reactions to experience. Sri Aurobindo (1999, p. 100) explains this idea of Sāṁkhya philosophy thus:

> The human reactions sway perpetually between the dualities created by the soul's subjection to Nature and by its often intense but narrow struggle for mastery and enjoyment, a struggle for the most part ineffective. The soul circles in an unending round of Nature's alluring and distressing opposites, success and failure, good fortune and ill fortune, good and evil, sin and virtue, joy and grief, pain and pleasure. It is only when, awaking from its immersion in Prakriti, it perceives its oneness with the One and its oneness

> with all existences that it can become free from these things and found its right relation to this executive world-Nature. Then it becomes indifferent to her inferior modes, equal-minded to her dualities, capable of mastery and freedom; it is seated above her as the high-throned knower and witness filled with the calm intense unalloyed delight of his own eternal existence. The embodied spirit continues to express its powers in action, but it is no longer involved in ignorance, no longer bound by its works; its actions have no longer a consequence within it, but only a consequence outside in Prakriti.

He points out that while it is not necessary to accept the Sāṁkhya philosophy embedded in the *Gītā* to understand *karma yoga*, it provides a useful tool to analyse the psychological experience: philosophy is 'after all' only a way of formulating to ourselves intellectually in their essential significance the psychological and physical facts of existence and their relation to any ultimate reality that may exist.

Overcoming egotism

Therefore, the desired goal that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is taking Arjuna to is the elimination of egoistic activity which has its foundation in egoistic consciousness. Desire has its source in emotions, sensations and instincts and, from their affects, it pervades thought and volition. The ego sense not only lives in these movements but it can also be found in the thinking mind and its will where it becomes fully self-conscious. Desire takes many forms but the most powerful is the craving or seeking after the fruit of works. Egoism gives us a sense of mastery and idea of freedom not letting us realize that we are actually bound by our own desires. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna the first rule of actions—do work that needs to be done without any desire for fruit, *niṣkāma karma* (detached action).

How do we know that we are truly working desirelessly? The test is the absolute equality of the mind and heart to all results, reactions, happenings. If we are not moved or react to good or ill fortune, respect or insult, fame or notoriety, victory or defeat, then we have the absolute liberation to which the *Gītā* points us, but not otherwise. Even the smallest reaction shows that at least some part is still bound by ignorance.

But how can such equanimity be arrived at? Certain steps have to be taken. First, the shocks of the world have to be borne in such a manner that the core of our being remains untouched and silent even when the surface is shaken. This implies that the watching soul has to separate itself from the outer workings of nature. Only then will it gradually become possible to radiate peace from the luminous centre to the dark peripheries. Help on the path can come from various sources like stoicism, calmness and a sense of religious exaltation. Or, the powers of the mental nature can be called upon, but eventually all these have to be discarded or transformed to achieve true equality and peace within.

But then the question arises would action at all be possible because a human being is motivated by his desires or because he has certain mental, vital or physical wants. These may be for riches, honours or fame, or he might crave personal

satisfaction of the mind or heart or be driven to acquire power or pleasure. It may even be a moral need to fulfil his ideals, bring his ideas to fruition or to serve his country or his gods. What is the incentive to act if all these, many of them being the noblest that we can think of, are said to constitute desire that must be discarded.

Regaining consciousness

The *Gītā's* answer is that all action must be done with the consciousness fixed on the Divine. The works must be done as a sacrifice to the Divine and eventually our entire being inclusive of our mind, will, heart, sense, life and body have to be surrendered. God-love and God-service must be the only motive. This transformation of the motive force and very character of works is the foundation of the unique synthesis of work, love and knowledge or the triune path to which the *Gītā* points. In the end, it is not the individual desire but the consciously felt will of the Eternal that remains as the sole driver of our actions and the sole originator of its initiative. Equality, renunciation of all desire for the fruit of our works, action done as a sacrifice to the supreme Lord of our nature constitute *karma yoga*.

Hence, what Śrī Kṛṣṇa advocates is that it is better to act wisely and thus liberate oneself from the consequences of action rather than to act foolishly or attempt to give up all action. The true path is to act with knowledge, because such action cannot bind the individual. It goes beyond the law of action and the inevitable experience of the fruits of action. It is almost like engaging in action and yet being actionless. The key that Śrī Kṛṣṇa presents is the union of two largest and highest states or powers of consciousness, equality and oneness.

Yudhiṣṭhira's grief and its transformation

At the end of the Kurukṣetra war, Yudhiṣṭhira, like Arjuna at the beginning, is bowed down with grief. He feels that it is because of their covetousness that the dreadful carnage of the kinsmen has been caused. Because of him, he says, Kṛṣṇa will find it difficult to face his people in Dvārakā on his return. Draupadī, too, has been left childless and Subhadrā has lost her only son, Abhimanyu. His sorrow has been increased because Kuntī had hidden the truth of Karṇa from him. He felt they owed a debt of gratitude to Karṇa because he had kept his promise to Kuntī to spare four of her sons even if he got them under his power in the battlefield, and he had kept his word on various occasions. The only person he had declared that he would fight to the finish was Arjuna and the result was that he had not only lost to him but Arjuna had ended up slaying his uterine brother. Yudhiṣṭhira repeatedly grieved for the death of Karṇa.

While Yudhiṣṭhira condemned himself for having been the cause of the death of all those who were dear to them—kinsmen and friends for the sake of sovereignty—he acknowledged that they too had been at fault as they had always been full of envy and hate, hankering after earthly objects. Duryodhana's heart was

always full of guile. Since their childhood he had tried every means to destroy the *Pāṇḍavas*. He was malicious and deceitful and because of his actions, neither the *Kauravas* nor the *Pāṇḍavas* could enjoy the sovereignty of Hastināpura, or the pleasures of the world. The *Kauravas* did not listen to the advice of their ministers, friends or the learned men. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, too, followed the evil policies of his son. Hence, it was because of Duryodhana's acts that the race had been exterminated. It was because of this that the *Pāṇḍavas* had been pushed into slaying those whom they should never have harmed, thereby incurring the censure of the world. However, this realization did not lessen Yudhiṣṭhira's stupefying grief, and therefore, he said he would go to the forests and live the life of an ascetic.

Seeing Yudhiṣṭhira's despondent state, all the brothers, Draupadī, Vyāsa, Nārada and Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself tried to transform his thinking to bring him to a level of stability so that he would accept the throne of Hastināpura and not nullify all the exertions of the past. Several arguments are marshalled between them. In fact, Draupadī, who has lost all her sons, shows remarkable courage in contrast to Yudhiṣṭhira's dejection and despair.

A great feat was achieved by winning the war and why should everything be abandoned because of Yudhiṣṭhira's fickleness of heart, asks Draupadī. Besides, as she points out, why does Yudhiṣṭhira not take pride in his brothers, each one of whom was like a celestial being capable of resisting all foes and all of whom had so loyally obeyed and followed him. Moreover, throughout their sojourn in the forest he had promised them that their sufferings would end by fighting and defeating Duryodhana, and that they would enjoy the sovereignty of Hastināpura. They had accepted his decisions and kept the word given by him at the time of the game of dice, and now he could not make everything futile by his folly and madness. Since he was the eldest, the others felt bound to follow him but, as she says, to do so now would be lunacy. If they had any sense, they would imprison him and take upon themselves the governance of Hastināpura. A person who acted from dullness of intellect, the way Yudhiṣṭhira proposed to do, never prospered and mad people needed to be treated, not followed, otherwise adversity and danger befell them.

Bhīmasena hit upon a great psychological truth when he pointed out to Yudhiṣṭhira that there were two kinds of interdependent diseases—physical and mental. He, who regretted past physical or mental woes, repeated them, suffered twice over. Cold, heat and wind were the three attributes of the body. When they were in harmony, there was health. Remedies had been laid down for when one prevailed over the other. Cold was checked by heat and heat by cold. Goodness, passion and darkness were the three attributes of the mind. When these three were in harmony, there was mental health. If one of them predominated, disease resulted and remedies had been provided for it. Grief was checked by joy and joy by grief. One living in present enjoyment remembered his past woes, while living presently in suffering, recollected his past happiness. Yudhiṣṭhira, however, had always risen above both sorrow and joy in the past. He should not, therefore, now get embroiled in such emotions, using his memory to become sad at a time of joy.

Bhīma points out that Yudhiṣṭhira had now to fight another battle that was with his own mind alone. If he did not win this battle during his lifetime, he would then have to war with these very foes again in another life even after his death. Therefore, he had to fight without delay. He had to conquer and identify his mind's foes himself, with the help of his own actions. Otherwise his condition would become pitiable. But if he won over his mind's demons, he would attain the goal of life.

Besides, as Arjuna points out, Yudhiṣṭhira had no reason to grieve because he had injured his friends and kinsmen because no one could live in this world without doing injury to another. All life in the world is dependent on another. Animals lived upon animals, the stronger upon the weaker. Finally, all things were destroyed by the great Destroyer. The man of knowledge was never stupefied by death. It was only foolish *kṣatriyas* who took refuge in the woods. Even ascetics could not support their lives without killing creatures. There were innumerable creatures in the water, on the earth and in the fruits. One slaughtered them because there could be no higher duty than supporting one's life. There were many living things that were so minute that their existence could only be inferred not seen. They were destroyed even by the falling of the eyelid. So how could anyone escape destroying other living things?

As far as slaughter of kinsmen was concerned, Arjuna gives the example of the gods and the *dānavas* or the demons. Even the gods wished for the slaughter of their kinsmen who were the demons. They, too, had won their prosperity through internecine quarrels and so what sin could there be in such quarrels? There were two issues here, says Arjuna: abstention from injury and injury promoted by righteous motives. Of these whatever action was needed to procure righteousness was considered superior. There was no act that was wholly meritorious or wholly wicked. Something of both could be seen in all actions. Therefore, there should not be any despondency in slaying foes and he who did it was not sinful. A person who took up a weapon to slay an armed foe advancing upon him was naturally provoked to wrath and could not be condemned for a wrong action. Besides, the inner soul of every creature was incapable of being slain so how could another kill it. As a person entered a new house, so also the soul entered successive bodies. Abandoning forms that were worn out, a creature acquired new forms. People incapable of seeing this truth regarded this as death.

Then, two interrelated questions are dealt with: *What constitutes doing one's duty according to one's station in life? And what is true renunciation?* Arjuna points out that Yudhiṣṭhira was born in the race of kings and it was his duty to govern. If he abandoned the kingdom he would be committing a sin because in the absence of a king, the kingdom would be neglected and virtue would be destroyed. Yudhiṣṭhira had to do his duty as a *kṣatriya* and as a king. Bhīmasena points out that a life of renunciation should be adopted by kings only in times of distress, when they were overcome with decrepitude or were defeated by foes. A *kṣatriya* should never lead a life of renunciation as he had the capacity to support not only himself but also others. Only that man should lead a solitary life of contentment in the woods that

could not support sons and grandsons, the deities and the *ṛṣis*, the guests and the *pitaraḥ*. The deer and the boars and birds, although they led a forest life, did not attain heaven. Similarly, mountains and trees lead a life of renunciation and do not injure anybody, but they gain no merit by it. If all those who just filled their own stomachs could attain success, then all aquatic creatures would do so as they had no one to support but themselves. A *kṣatriya* had to lead a life of action. Bereft of action, he could never succeed. The world could only be sustained when every creature was employed in doing acts proper to its nature. Therefore, action was essential as without action nothing could succeed.

Nakula, too, tried to persuade Yudhiṣṭhira. Know, he said, that the gods themselves depend upon the fruits of action. The *pitaraḥ* or the ancestors engage in action, and give rain even to the disbelievers as they have to abide by the laws of the Creator as declared in the *Vedas*. The domestic way of life was said to be superior to all other modes of life by all those who knew the *Vedas*. Therefore, a person who gave away his righteously acquired wealth to the *brāhmaṇas*, well versed in the *Vedas* and in sacrifices, and restrained his soul was said to be a true renouncer. But a person who discarded domesticity for renunciation was only labouring in darkness.

The four different modes of life, said Nakula, were once weighed in balance. When domestic life was placed on one scale, the other three had to be placed on the other before it could be balanced. Therefore, a real renouncer was one who followed the domestic way of life as his duty without any desire for fruit, and not one who went to the woods abandoning home and society. A man, who hypocritically exposed righteousness, but failed to forget his desires even while living in the woods, remained limited by mortality. Such acts were done from vanity and were unproductive even of fruits. On the other hand, acts done in the real spirit of renunciation resulted in plenty. True virtues were tranquility, self-restraint, fortitude, truth, purity, simplicity, sacrifice, perseverance and righteousness. True renunciation meant renunciation of every internal and external attachment, and not simply leaving home to live in the woods.

Sahadeva too supported his brother when he said that one did not attain success by renouncing external objects only. Even after renouncing mental attachments, success was doubtful. There was no religious merit and happiness for one who left external objects but internally coveted them. The word '*mama*' (mine) spelt death while the opposite '*nā-mama*' (not mine) was the eternal *Brahma* itself. *Brahmā* (God of creation) and death both were part of every individual and motivated him to act. If this be true then that which was called soul was not subject to destruction and the one who destroyed the body could not be guilty of slaughter. If the soul and body were both created and destroyed together then all the rites and acts prescribed in the scriptures were futile. Therefore, concludes Sahadeva, driving away all the doubts about the immortality of the soul, a man of intelligence should adopt the path shown by the righteous and wise ancestors. He thought that the life of that king was fruitless who, having conquered the earth, did not enjoy it. A person could live in the forests but if he remained attached to

things, he lived within the jaws of Death. The hearts and outward forms of all creatures were only manifestations of one's own self. Only they who perceived this, who saw it like that, escaped the great fear of destruction.

Kings, says Arjuna, could not govern without wealth and without having the power to chastise. There was no virtue in poverty because a poor man could easily be exploited and falsely accused. Only one with wealth could sustain himself, and had friends, kinsmen, family honour and respect in the world. Even religion cannot be practiced without wealth. Further, wealth created more wealth. Not only that, monarchs had to necessarily appropriate wealth from others because that was the means of their prosperity, and wealth could not be earned without doing some injury to others. Hence kings had to conquer and then appropriate to themselves what they won. Similarly, sons spoke of the wealth of their fathers as their own.

Draupadī points out that a *kṣatriya* who could not punish could never succeed or enjoy the earth. Even the subjects of a king could never be happy with a ruler who was not firm. Friendship for all creatures, charity, study of the *Vedas*, penances—all these constituted the duties of a *brāhmaṇa,* and not of a king. The highest duties of a king were to restrain the wicked, cherish the honest, and never retreat from battle. In him should be both forgiveness and wrath, giving and taking, terror and fearlessness, chastisement and reward. Yudhiṣṭhira, she said, had not acquired the earth through study, gift or mendicancy, but by defeating and slaying the army of Duryodhana with its invincible warriors.

Supporting Draupadī, Arjuna said that the man armed with the rod of chastisement, governed all subjects and protected them. Therefore, the wise had characterized the rod of chastisement as righteousness itself. One class of men desisted from wrong because of fear of punishment from the king; another from the fear of death; a third from the fear of the next world; and yet another from fear of society. Therefore, the course of the world was dependent on the administration of penalties and the fear of it. It was fear that prevented men from devouring one another. It restrained the ungovernable and punished the wicked. When the king was righteous the subjects never forgot themselves. The *brahmacārī*, the householder, the recluse in the forest and the religious mendicant all walked their respective ways through fear of chastisement. Now that the kingdom had been won, righteously or unrighteously, it was their duty, said Arjuna, to stop grieving, enjoy it and to perform the necessary actions. It was only fortunate men who lived with their wives and children, ate good food, wore excellent clothes and cheerfully acquired virtue. All actions were dependent on wealth and wealth was dependent on chastisement, and duties had been declared for all, so that the world could be maintained.

Even Vyāsa told Yudhiṣṭhira that the only way out for him was to do his duty. Penances were for *brāhmaṇas*. A *kṣatriya* was the protector of all persons in respect of their duties. That man who, addicted to earthly possessions, transgressed wholesome restraints, that offender against social harmony, should be chastised with a strong hand. A person who tried to transgress authority, whether he was an attendant, a son, or even a saint, was sinful and had to be punished or even killed.

That king who conducted himself otherwise was sinful. If he did not protect morality when it was being disregarded, he was an abettor in the offence and committed sin. Vyāsa emphasized that the *Kauravas* had scant regard for morality and so they together with their followers had been slain by Yudhiṣṭhira. Then why did he indulge in such grief? The king should slay those that deserve death, give gifts to persons who deserve charity, and protect his subjects according to his *dharma*.

Yudhiṣṭhira held up Janaka, the king of Mithilā as his ideal. Arjuna took up the example and recounted the discourse between Janaka and his wife, to show Yudhiṣṭhira how false was his understanding. King Janaka preparing to renounce everything, shaved off his head and wore the clothes of a mendicant. When his wife saw him thus she reproved him by saying that having abandoned abundant wealth and corn, he had by this action reduced himself to desire a handful of barley. How could he now gratify his guests, gods, the seers and the ancestors? As a renunciate he had cast off all action but he had been supporting thousands of *brāhmaṇas*, and many more besides. How could he now beg the same people for his own food? His mother had been made sonless by him and his wife a widow. Rendering them helpless, what regions did he hope to attain. What he was doing was sinful and he would have neither this world nor the other. He wanted to wander around as a mendicant, but he had been like a large and sacred lake to all the creatures whose thirst he had quenched and sustained. He had been like a mighty tree worth adoring, as it gave shelter to all. How could such a one wait and worship others. If even an elephant desisted from all work, he would be eaten up by carnivorous creatures and destroyed by worms. If Janaka claimed that a kingdom and a handful of barley were both the same to him, why abandon the former? But if he got attached to a handful of barley then he was obviously not detached from everything. Mendicants were supported by householders. A giver of food was the giver of life. Coming out from among those who led a domestic life, mendicants depended on those very persons from amidst whom they came. Therefore, one did not become a mendicant by renouncing possessions, or by adopting a life of dependence on charity. A true mendicant was one who renounced the possessions and pleasures of the world in a sincere frame of mind. Unattached at heart, though attached in outward show, standing aloof from the world having broken all his bonds, and regarding friend and foe equally, he was truly emancipated. Therefore, she advised Janaka, he should resume his kingdom and keep all his passions under control. Even the great ascetic Devasthāna advised Yudhiṣṭhira not to abandon the earth that he had righteously won. Instead of renouncing his wealth, he should use it to perform sacrifices.

Once Janaka requested a wise *brāhmaṇa*, Aśmaka, to resolve his doubts. He asked him how he who desired good should behave on occasions of the accession and the destruction of both kinsmen and wealth. Aśmaka said that immediately after the formation of the body, joy and grief attached themselves to it. Although there was a possibility of either of the two overtaking the person, yet whichever overtook him more quickly robbed him of his reason like the winds drove away the gathering clouds. In times of prosperity such a person became arrogant as

he regarded himself to be of high birth, free to do whatever he liked, as he was convinced that he was not an ordinary man. He got addicted to all earthly enjoyments, and began to waste the wealth collected by his ancestors.

All mental sorrows, said Aśmaka, arose from two causes—delusion of the mind and the admittance of distress. Different sorrows arose out of attachment to earthly enjoyments. Decrepitude and Death devoured all creatures whether weak or strong, short or tall. No one, no matter how powerful could escape them. The evils of life could overtake one in early, middle or old age. They could never be avoided. Good and evil, both followed Destiny. All was transitory. Even associations with wives, relatives and well-wishers were like travellers at a roadside inn. Life and its enjoyments were constantly revolving like a wheel and the companionship of those that were dear was transitory. Things that were today were not there tomorrow. Therefore, a king could only act righteously and this would free him from sorrow. Kṛṣṇa himself told Yudhiṣṭhira not to indulge in grief, as those that had been slain in battle would not come back. They were like objects in a dream that vanished when one awoke. His foes were also great heroes and had died heroic deaths. Hence, they had gone to heaven and there was no reason for Yudhiṣṭhira to lament. All were subject to happiness and misery, and had to die. What cause was there then for sorrow?

Vyāsa asked Yudhiṣṭhira why he thought of himself as the slayer of his kinsmen and foes. Who did he think was the doer, the Supreme Being or a human being? Was everything the result of Chance in the world, or were the fruits that were enjoyed or suffered, the results of previous action? If man acted according to God's wishes, then the consequences of his actions should also attach to the Supreme Being and not to him. For example, if a person cuts down a tree with an axe, then the one who cut the tree has to take the consequences, and not the axe. It could not also be said that the one who made the axe should take the responsibility of the tree being cut. If it was not reasonable for one man to bear the consequences of an act done by another, then, Yudhiṣṭhira should really hold the Supreme Being responsible for all that happened as he was only the means, as with the axe. But if Yudhiṣṭhira saw himself as the agent of all his acts why not throw all responsibility upon the Supreme Being, and therefore whatever he had done could bring no evil consequences. No one, points out Vyāsa, can ever turn away from that which was destined. If, Destiny was the result of the acts of former lives, then no sin could be incurred in this life, just as the consequences of cutting down a tree could not touch the maker of the axe. If Yudhiṣṭhira found it necessary to ascertain what was good and what was evil in the world, then he should attend to the scriptures where it had been laid down that kings should stand with the rod of chastisement uplifted in their hands. Acts, good and bad, continually revolved here as a wheel and men obtained the fruits according to their actions. One sinful act proceeded from another. Therefore, Yudhiṣṭhira should avoid all evil acts and not set his heart upon grief. He should adhere to the duties of his own order even if he found them distasteful. Self-destruction did not sit well on him. If he thought he had sinned, he could expiate for it, but that was possible only if he lived. He who died

could not perform the prescribed sacrifices. Therefore, he should do his duty and all the expiatory acts required, or he would have to repent in the next world.

Conclusion

Thus, as with Arjuna, so with Yudhiṣṭhira. He has to be schooled into doing his duty with equanimity and detachment for the sustenance of the earth and his own salvation. The situation at the onset of war does not change. It is only the perception and understanding that is transformed. Yudhiṣṭhira had gone into the war without qualms, knowing that it was taking place in spite of his best efforts to avoid it. Arjuna accepted that he had to fight in spite of himself, as an act of duty. Similarly, Yudhiṣṭhira had to accept the kingship of Hastināpura after the war, whatever may be his psychological and emotional revolt at the prospect of it, and do his duties as its king. This is the supreme renunciation and it can only be achieved in terms of Kṛṣṇa's '*mahāvākya*' at the end of the *Gītā*:

> Forsaking all (religious) duties come to Me as thy sole refuge. I will deliver thee from all sins. Do not grieve. This is not to be ever declared by thee to one who practiseth no austerities, to one who is not a devotee, to one who never waiteth on a preceptor, nor yet to one who calumniateth Me. He who shall inculcate this supreme mystery to those that are devoted to Me, offering Me the highest devotion, will come to Me, freed from (all his) doubts. Amongst men there is none who can do Me a dearer service than he, nor shall any other on earth be dearer to Me than he (Ganguli, 1990, p. 97).

Taken out of its context, it might appear to mean that Kṛṣṇa's final word is to leave everything to him. This would be inaccurate and quite opposite to what has gone both before and after.

The argument of the *Gītā* actually resolves itself into three steps by which action arises out of the human into the divine plane, leaving the bondage of the lower for the liberty of a higher law. First, by the renunciation of desire and in perfect equanimity, works have to be done as a sacrifice by man as the doer, a sacrifice to a deity who is the supreme and the only Self, not yet realized by him in his own being. This is the initial step. Second, not only the desire for the fruit of action, but even the claim to be the doer of works has to be renounced in the realization of the Self as the true Doer, an immutable principle. Works are simply the operation of the universal creative force or *prakṛti*, which is the dynamic mutable power. Lastly, the supreme Self has to be seen as the supreme *puruṣa* governing this *prakṛti*. He directs all works while simultaneously transcending them. Individual works have to be done in a spirit of sacrifice and offered to him. This implies that the whole being has to be surrendered to Him and the whole consciousness has to be raised to dwell in this divine consciousness, so that action can be done in perfect spiritual liberty. This is the lesson taught to Arjuna in the battlefield, and later to Yudhiṣṭhira after the war.

Therefore, the first step is *karma yoga*, the selfless sacrifice of works, and here the insistence is on action. The second is *jñāna yoga*, the self-realization and

knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world and here the insistence is on knowledge. But the two are not separate and they act together. Contemporary psychology, too, would insist on the individual having a true knowledge or perspective of the work that he has to do and then act with joy and satisfaction. But here it would stop. The *Gītā* and the *Mahābhārata* as a whole take the third step, that of *bhakti yoga*, or devotion, the seeking of the supreme Self as the divine Being. However, knowledge and action are not subordinated but only raised, vitalized and fulfilled. Works still continue in true knowledge but now are done as stationed in the Divine. The double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion which leads to oneness with the Divine who is posited as the true source of all liberation, truth and joy in all our actions; not in any world or state hereafter but here itself in this imperfect world of complications and complexities.

Endnotes

1. All quotations from the Mahābhārata are taken from the translation of Kisari Mohan Ganguli.

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22

Cultural construction of creativity: Dualism and beyond

Minati Panda

Research on creativity in mainstream psychology is inescapably rooted in the philosophical and cultural orientation of individualism. This made 'autonomy' a desirable trait and counter-posed it with dependence. In fact, dependency and conformity were viewed as negative traits constraining one's freedom, which is at the base of any creative act/behaviour (Montuori & Purser, 1995; Purser & Montuori, 2004). Thus, in the study of creativity, the creative individual is often the focus (Sternberg, 1988). The claims that it is ultimately the individuals themselves who are creative, and that, membership in a group is, more often than not, a hindrance to creativity characterized the construction of creativity in mainstream American psychology (Montuori & Purser, 1995; 1999). The majority of studies in this field of inquiry came from North America and were mindlessly replicated in other parts of the world (Raina, 1991). The twentieth century psychological literature on creativity in India is, therefore, based on the biases and assertions about the supremacy of the individual, whereas, culture and cultural processes were deemed less important (Raina, 1993; Sternberg, 1985, 1999). This raised the question as to whether any individual can really be considered isolated or alone in the pursuit of both knowledge and creativity. If the answer is 'no', then it is imperative to ask the question that logically follows from the earlier one, that is whether, any creative process can occur without any form of interaction or socio-cultural influence. Even if somebody works in physical isolation, is she or he not part of a larger discursive context which is socio-politically and historically determined? In the words of Montuori and Purser (1995), 'Can there be a lone genius?'

In fact, individualism, according to Montuori and Purser (2004) thrived on the numerous forms of dualisms or dichotomy. Creativity research in psychology suffered most because of our lack of ability to overcome these dualisms that are built into modern ways of knowing. Such dualisms have unfortunately created cultural polarization between self and society, creativity and conformity, order and disorder, individualism and collectivism (Purser and Montuori, 2004). Cultures were categorized into more or less creative cultures using these bipolar adjectives.

In individualistic cultures, where people hold an atomistic view of the self, creativity is seen as the product of cognitions of a lone genius (Simonton, 1999; Montuori & Purser, 1999).

According to Purser and Montuori (2004) and Oligvy (cited in Purser & Montuori, 2004), in cultures where people hold a holistic view of self, creativity by definition is social and context embedded; and the individual is epiphenomenal—the vehicle for social forces which play themselves out with or without any particular individual. For individualists, social factors are epiphenomenal (Sampson, 1991), and for more collectivist positions, the individual is simply expressing the social, political and economic forces of the times. Either way, we find an oppositional, disjunctive form of thinking in *either/or* terms, which can be traced back to dualisms (Ogilvy, cited in Purser & Montuori, 2004).

The scholars who converged on the other extreme of the dichotomy preferred the term 'social creativity' which had its genesis in the reaction to this discursive context of individualistic project. In his brilliant exposition on 'What is an Author?', Foucault (cited in Hoffman and Weiner, 2003) asks, *do we always want to trace ideas back to specific authors? Why do we insist that ideas or concepts, or even literary works, are the creation of a single individual?* In fact, the postmodernists raised a fundamental question on the contribution of one single individual as his knowledge is socially produced. It questioned the centre and brought in the periphery to the centre through a de-centering process. It is interesting here to examine why does Foucault say the author is 'dead'? According to Hoffman and Weiner (2003):

> Its Foucault's way of saying that the author is decentred, shown to be only a part of the structure, a subject position, and not the center. In the humanist view, authors were the source and origin of texts (and perhaps of language itself, like Derrida's engineer), and were also thus beyond texts — hence authors were 'centers'. In declaring the author dead, Foucault follows Nietzsche's declaration (at the end of the nineteenth century) that 'God is dead,' a statement which Derrida then reads as meaning that God is no longer the center of the system of philosophy which Nietzsche is rejecting. By declaring the death of the author, Foucault is 'deconstructing' the idea that the author is the origin of something original, and replacing it with the idea that the 'author' is the product or function of writing, of the text.

In other words, any creative writing can not only be attributed to the genius of a single author or man as he himself is the product of a particular discursive practice in a given community (here community can be as big as the world also).

However, it is important to note here that, though, this counter thesis brought in 'social' processes to the centre stage, it could not push away from the dominant discourse on creativity and creative processes the numerous dualisms created by 'individualism'. In fact, the very conception of social creativity was based on a complete rejection of the role of lone individual and, as a result, it attained a position of the polar opposite to individualism. By virtue of being the polar opposite to the individualistic construction of creativity, social creativity seemed to have assumed that it is based on or, at the least, represents the concerns of collectivistic

cultures. In fact, some scholars went as far as claiming that social creativity essentially refers to Oriental construal of creativity. The implicit assumption underlying such a straightforward assertion could be that the Oriental construal of creativity is necessarily the polar opposite of individualistic construal of creativity without sufficiently examining the latter. In this sense, it can be claimed that the concept 'social creativity' is an offshoot of Western philosophy rather than being an expression of Oriental cultures.

Wilden (1987) examined the creativity literature from the perspective of 'imaginary' oppositions—creativity vs. conformity and order vs. disorder. In Western scholars' views, cultures can be hypothesized to differ in the extent to which they embody creativity enhancing or limiting features such as worldview and value placed on conformity to tradition (Lubart, 1989). There is a strong opposition between individualism and pressures of conformity to community norms. According to Lubart (1989), some cultures favour conformity and structure and others reward innovation. Lubart (1989) discusses two studies, one on Amish and urban American school children by Lembright and Yamamoto (1965) and the second on divergent thinking among nine- to eleven-year-old children in the United States, England, France, Puerto Rico, Turkey and Greece by Torrrance (1964). Both these studies revealed that cultures differ in the dominant type of pressures, the forms of pressures, and the consequences of pressures. Lembright and Yamamoto (1965) found the Amish worldview as highly structured which was implicated by the factual, non-imaginative nature of the Amish's responses. Torrance's (1964) study revealed that some cultures favour conformity and structure and others reward innovation. According to all the three scholars, people are more creative in the less structured society which rewards innovation. The problems with these analyses are obvious in that creativity across cultures is rated by those whose worldviews are inescapably Western. Comparing creativity of different cultural groups assessed in this fashion is problematic because the groups do not share a common reference point and, therefore, any such comparison leads to a biased formulation. There are theorists who have suggested that a culture's worldview can enhance creativity when it empowers people to work towards the future. According to Trachtman (1975), societies that do not maintain faith in progress and the future, value immediate gratification, and see the world as complex, are believed to stifle creativity.

Such approaches to categorize cultures as less and more creative on the basis of two criteria—worldview and value of conformity—could be ethnocentric. Both the studies discussed by Lubart (1989), appear to have taken one 'universal' view of creativity, that is, the Western individualistic view. The oriental cultures and researches reveal that conformity and structuring one's daily life are part of creative processes and, therefore, are not perceived as anti-creative, the way it is perceived in the West. Contemporary psychological researches in countries like India, where both concepts and instruments are borrowed from the West, tend to validate the dualism, treat these phenomena as ontologically opposed and mutually exclusive categories. Vidya Niwas Misra (1992), Vatsyayana (1968), Bhattacharya (1992), and a few psychologists like G. Misra, Srivastava and I. Misra (2006), and Raina

(1993) in the recent past have questioned the Western construction of creativity and tried to throw light on the different facets of creativity in an Indian context. Unfortunately a large majority of empirical studies done by other Indian psychologists used Western tests and measures to assess creativity as a personal attribute (Tanwan, 1977). It is, therefore, imperative to explore the bases of 'creativity' in the Indian context.

Over centuries, Indians have been engaged with the analysis of creativity in various ways. Creativity is often viewed as '*navonavonmeśaśāliniprajñā*', that is the intellect that generates new forms (Tagore, 1922). It refers to the creation of something new and different, characterizing a digression from the normal/usual and yet remaining in harmony with nature. The latter half of this definition is that which makes the Indian construal of creativity and creative processes unique and different from the Western conceptions. In India, the human spirit and the spirit of the universe are considered one (Chandra, 1992). According to Chandra:

> Man and the world are one great truth. How can we divide the bud and the blossom? The literature of India are the purest voice of her deeps, the cream of her reason, born of leaves soaked in the dew of dawns since the days of the 'Rigveda'. Ramayana, Shakuntalam, and many other great Indian epics provide a bewildering account of creativity being an extension of the milieu or the environment creating and endorsing different levels of existence and consciousness.

Chandra questions the bipolarity of phenomena in Indian creative expressions—transistors or transcendence, computers or contemplation, where lies the chaotic surface and where is the powerful vitality, where is the conflagration or where is compassion (*karuṇā*)? Perhaps 'and' instead of 'or' would be appropriate—secret links of man and nature are the purest, primordial beauty (p. 49). The detailed descriptions of art and the process of creation of art are found in a number of Indian texts some of which are discussed below in order to examine the cultural construction of 'creativity' and the creative processes in the Indian context.

Environment and creativity

The artist is a part of nature. The creative work is a product of the environment whose constituting elements are nature, society, individual psyche, religious and philosophical traditions which interact among themselves and merge almost imperceptibly into the form and content of art (Bhattacharya, 1992; G. Misra et al., 2006). These elements undergo a process of transformation and concentration in the mind of the artist aided by his/her creative imagination. Even though the style of a writer or an artist is shaped by his/her own personal capacity and inclination, what remains, at the source of this creative imagination is the culture and experience of the culture. Artists' creative imagination comes from their ability to relate to and co-exist with the flora and fauna, experience the origin and the extension of self into nature and also the ability to re-create nature in imagination (Misra,

1992). The ancient texts in India provide varied accounts of the relationship between culture and creativity.

Primary sources like the *Vedas* provide a rich account of the concept of human beings in relation to habitat, physical, social and cultural environments, the animal world and the activities of the mind and the senses. *Vedic* writings present a picture of the biological and the psychic being and also suggest that humans can transcend both these aspects and experience *ānanda*, the ultimate bliss. In Indian thought, a person is constantly seen as an embodiment of elements and forces of nature and in relationship with animal and plant life. This gives the Indian evolutionary worldview a different character from that implied in the Western idea of evolution. Human beings are not the best because they overpower and conquer nature and are, thus, the fittest to survive, but because they are among many with a capacity for consciousness and transcendence of pure physicality through physical discipline and discipline of mind.

It is evident from texts like *Nāṭyaśāstra* that the Indian aesthetic theories and the earlier literary theories emerged in a cultural context. According to Vatsyayan (1992), the first few chapters of *Nāṭyaśāstra* provide ample evidence of the world view which offered an environment for the creation and evolution of such an aesthetic theory. 'The edifice of the Nāṭyaśāstra would crumble if it were taken out of context of the periphery of a world view in which man and environment had a special relationship and where man was not the conqueror of the environment but was one among all of the living matter' (Vatsyayan, 1992, p. 22). While talking of *abhinaya* (acting) in Chapter-XIII, Bharat lays down two modes, viz., *lokadharmī* and *nāṭyadharmī*. The first is the dramatic presentation of facts and feelings as they obtain in nature and life outside, while the second is a stylized mode with technical superimpositions (Krishnamurti, 1992, p. 37). *Lokadharmī* is considered to be a superior form of art. Chapter XXV provided the criteria that become relevant in aesthetic judgment or in evaluating artistic merit. The key terms for evaluation of artwork are *loka* (folk tradition/people), *veda*, and *ādhyātmya* (spirituality); *loka* being the first major criterion. Abhinavagupta in his commentary on *Vyaktiviveka* validates these criteria. Fidelity to nature and life is the exclusive criterion outside the world of art for evaluating the *nāṭya* (theatrical performances). In fact people are of different natures and *nāṭya* is rooted in nature. According to Bharata, actors should well incorporate the criterion of *loka* in their performance. Literary theorists like Bhāmaḥ also emphasize *loka* in poetry, *tatra lokāśrayaṁ kāvyam* (poetry is grounded in *loka*).

The very names given to literary styles are geographical—*Vaidarbhī*, *Gaudī*, *Pañcālī* etc. (these are ancient Indian towns/villages), and this indeed is indicative of the fact that environment is associated with varying literary modes (Krishnamurti, 1992). It is implicit that the place here refers to the existence of a particular culture in a geographical location distinct from other locations/cultures which played a significant role in the production of a particular literary or artistic style. This reinforces the view that the distinctiveness of a creative style of form comes from the distinctiveness of an environment or cultural milieu. Similarly,

the concept of *gharānās* (which refer to the existence of different schools and forms of music) in *Hindustāni* music obtained their names from the place/family where they developed as stylistic forms. The term *gharānā* is derived from the root word '*ghar*' connoting house, home and most appropriately, family. The term is applied to various schools of *Hindustāni* classical music, especially *khayāl*. The concept is linked to the oral tradition, the *guru-śiṣya parampará* (teacher-pupil tradition) and the ethos of the guild system which continues to operate in the development and handing over of skills from father to son, in closeted traditions in many fields of Indian tradition and experience. The critical factor about the *gharānā* system is the prevalence of individual styles of rendition, which acquired distinct and special aesthetic values, along with individual repertoires of compositions and even *rāga* specialties. Though, the styles of *gharānās* often may tend to be the dominant creations of individuals, whose command over audiences has been extraordinary, one finds the influence (though subtle) of folk traditions (that includes dominant traditions in the area of music, dance, art, pottery etc.) of the community on the compositions and styles. As Indian classical music moves into the twenty-first century, it is significantly redefining its position within the blitz of commercial music proliferation. It is able to do so, because it maintains distinctiveness by virtue of being rooted in a long historical (folk) tradition of a given community. Even though the sensitive and subtle aesthetics of *gharānā* individualities are merging into an eclectic approach, yet the significance of *gharānā* ideology and style remain, representing the aesthetic and the functional value of Indian folk heritage as living tributes to centuries of disciplined artistic endeavour.

The popular dance forms in India, both classical and folk such as *Bharatanāṭyam*, *Mohini Aṭṭam*, *Kucipuḍi*, *Chau*, *Videśīya*, *Kathak*, *Kathakali* and *Oḍissi* provide clear evidence of a give and take relationship between the environment and the emergence of these dance forms. The dance forms derive their distinctiveness from the specific cultures and regions in which they developed. *Oḍissi,* for example, began as a temple dance in Puri, Orissa. The dominant themes of this dance form were on Jagannath and other gods with a narrative style typical of 16th century Oriya society. Many of Sri Chaitanya's devotional songs are enacted by the *Oḍissi* dancers even today. *Chau*, a military/war dance from the Mayurbhanj district of Orissa portrays the dominant military culture of Western Orissa. In the sixteenth century, when the *bhakti* movement was strong in coastal Orissa (in fact, the whole of coastal Orissa was resonating with the devotional songs of Sri Chaitanya), Western Orissa continued to emphasize military rule and a culture of masculine power, war, protest and independence. Different local Oriya and tribal groups from Mayurbhanj were encouraged to perform war dances. There was an inherent fear that spread of the *bhakti* movement would demilitarize the minds of people and would reduce their fighting instinct. Thus, the themes of *Chau* dance were mostly derived from the myths that surround Lord Śiva (God of Destruction) including his famous *tāṇḍava nṛtya* and different great wars mentioned in Indian mythology. *Oḍissi* and *Chau* differed in their dominant *rasas* (or the meta

emotional states), as both developed in two very different cultural milieu which fostered different kinds of world views among its people.

Origin myths and cultures' creative expressions

An artist is a part of nature that experiences his/her body as an extension of the larger experiential reality. The artist, according to Bhattacharya (1992, pp. 68–69):

> … retains in his body the primitive features of life, breathes natural air to live, co-exists with the flora and fauna, bears with climatic changes and above all allows his body to be consumed by the elements after death. He owes his birth too to nature. His creative imagination therefore recreates nature and makes Gods out of stars, rivers, mountains and oceans. He invents God or the absolute being and the other myths to explain the creation of the world.

The origin of distinct Western and Oriental views of creativity is worth noting here. In the Oriental world, the theories of creativity derive partly from a culture's creation myths. 'The Oriental view of cosmic creation is described as an ongoing process—a developing, an unfolding. The same is true for an Indian view where life and death… all originate from the almighty, the cosmic power' (Sinclaire, 1971). In India, myth making—an ongoing process, partly resulting from our feared ignorance about our own limitless universe—is organically linked up with our creative imagination and creative expressions. A closer look at temple arts, *Paṭṭa Citra* in Orissa, *Pahardi* arts in Rajasthan, *Madhubanī* in Bihar and also the dominant themes of many prominent dance forms like *Oḍissi, Kathakali, Kucipuḍi*, *Bharatanāṭyam* (these are classical dance forms from Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu respectively) provide evidence of our obsessive engagement with the themes related to several creation myths. Mythification around the man–nature relationship appears to be a continuing feature of our mind (Bhattacharya, 1992, p. 69) and our civilizational memory.

> Whether we regard nature as a friend or enemy, it is likely to be a constant source of images in poetry, of the descriptive and the narrative in fiction or painting and of symbols in all kinds of art; in fact, it is a never-ending source of artistic and creative imagination.

It may be noted that not only in India, but also in many African cultures, the artists at work are viewed as enacting or recreating the origin myth. The Dogon weaver, who draws threads from the spindles of a loom, is symbolically identified with Nommo, a primordial being, who wove together four elements to make the universe (Ben-Amos, 1986:60 cited in Lubart, 1989). The legendary expressions of *Viśvarūpa* described in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and *Daśa avatāra* (ten incarnations of God) present literary and artistic expressions of the origin myth in India.

It is believed that mystery is another powerful aspect of creative imagination. Creativity may not exist without mystery. The link between creative experience and imagination of mystery is consistent in diverse cultures of India (Chandra, 1992). Mystery surrounds the creation of the human and the universe,

reflected in the continuous engagement of creative artists of all ages in the creation and re-enactment of creation myths in writings, sculpture, dance, music and painting. Interestingly, a close analysis of themes surrounding origin myths in India may reveal that order out of chaos or non-order; new forms out of formless are implicit in the classic meaning of creativity. This could be true of many other cultures and their construal of creativity. If the concept of creativity stems from this origin (the culture's creation myth), then the perceived spontaneity of creativity and the locus of creativity in the individual logically belong together (Lubart, 1989). It will be difficult to separate the human from nature, order from chaos, destruction from the creation of new life. The *trinity* concept (a divine trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa posited as regulating creation, maintenance and destruction of the world) only lend support to such coexistences (Misra et al., 2006).

Psychology of imagination

In Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra*, the practice of *yoga* has been recommended for the attainment of the desired end. It is important to note here that in Indian thought, the concept of art as *yoga* has a strong tradition. This is because the purpose of *yoga* was mental concentration, carried so far as overlooking all distinctions between subject and object of contemplation: a means of achieving harmony or unity of consciousness (Coomaraswamy, 1987). Because the concentration of the artist was of this very nature, art was conceived as a special form of *yoga*. As Coomaraswamy (1987) observes:

> It should be understood that yoga ('union') is not merely a mental exercise or a religious discipline, but the most practical preparation for any undertaking whatever. … Through the East, wherever Hindu or Buddhist thoughts have deeply penetrated, it is firmly believed that all knowledge is directly accessible to concentrated 'one pointed' mind, without the direct intervention of senses. Probably all inventors, artist and mathematicians are more or less aware of this, as a matter of personal experience.

The conception of art as *yoga* is based on the belief that matter and mind, sense and spirit are not in opposition but are complementary (Vatsyayana, 1992, p. 26). The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* points out that:

> The senses turn to external objects and therefore man sees only these objects, not the internal soul (antaratman) but the wise one, with wise "inwards" and desirous of immortality, beholds the absolute soul (IV, 1). … [T]he twin possibilities, that the senses may be turned to look outward or inward, are clearly suggested. The one who has turned inward, and has experienced the formless, can see clearly the world of form (rupa) of taste, experience (rasa), smell (gandha) and of love (maithuna) (chap. IV. 3.). Here then is the second key to the worldview. The world-form (of nama and rupa) is an actuality to be comprehended but not to be got involved in. … [I]n the discussion of the 'Absolute' at no time are the body and the senses denied. Matter and mind,

> sense and spirit are not in opposition but are complementary. It is in this framework that the concept of yoga is first enunciated in this Upanishad.

Thus the Indian literary theory as well as the theory of aesthetics holds art as a *yogic* performance where the artist engages in both the inward and outward look and creates his imagination of things, matter, life and fulfilment and experience of bliss. There are abundant literary parallels for this conception of art as *yoga*. Vālmīki, although he was familiar with the story of Rāma, before composing the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* sought to realize it more profoundly, and,

> …seating himself with the face towards the east and sipping water according to the rule, he set himself to the yoga-contemplation of his theme. By virtue of his yoga power he clearly saw before him Rama, Lakshman and Sita, and Dasharatha together with his wives, in his kingdom laughing, talking, acting… By Yoga power that righteous one beheld all that had come to pass… And having truly seen all by virtue of his concentration, the generous sage began the setting forth of the history of Rama (Coomaraswamy, 1987).

The preceding analyses suggest a strong connection between dream, intuitive knowledge and art. The work of art is contemplated before the work of transcriptions or representation is begun. The artist uses imagination and intuitive knowledge to visualize and complete the text in mind before starting the work. In *Agni Purāṇa*, the imager is instructed, on the night before beginning his work, and after ceremonial purification, to pray, 'O thou Lord of all Gods, teach me in dreams how to carry out all the work I have in mind'. Another example taken from Buddhist sources explains the psychology of imagination as depicted in ancient texts:

> The artist, after ceremonial purification, is to proceed to a solitary place. There he is to perform the 'seven fold office' beginning with the invocation of the hosts of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, and the offering to them of real and imaginary flowers. Then he must realize in thought the four infinite moods of friendliness, compassion, sympathy, and impartiality. Then he must meditate upon the emptiness (shunyata) or non existence of all things, for 'by the fire of the idea abyss, it is said, there are destroyed beyond recovery the five factors' of ego consciousness. Then only should he invoke the desired divinity by the utterance of the appropriate seedword (bija) and should identify himself completely with the divinity to be represented. Then finally on pronouncing the dhyana mantram, in which the attributes are defined, the divinity appears visibly, like a reflection or in dream and this brilliant image is the artist's model (see Coomarswamy, 1987).

This ritual shows a clear understanding of the psychology of imagination. The first phase of creative imagination involves psychological preparation of the artist followed by the transformations of the thinking principle, self identification with the object of work, and last but not the least, the vividness of the final image.

These snippets from ancient texts clearly provide an anticipation of modern views, which associate myth, dream and art in representing dramatization of the innermost hopes and fears of human beings. It recommends right intellectual and

psychic preparation before undertaking a creative work. The practice of visualization was very evident and central in these texts.

> …there is aesthetic intuition on the part of the original artist, — the poet or creator; then the internal expression of this intuition — true creation or vision of beauty, the indication of this by external signs (language) for the purpose of communication, - the technical activity; and the resulting stimulation of the critic or rasika to reproduction of the original intuition or of some approximation to it (Coomaraswamy, 1987).

It is interesting to note here that 'what' and 'how' (that is, both the knowledge and the method) of the right intellectual and psychic preparation of the artist before undertaking a creative work evolves in the Indian social and cultural context of a given time and there is shared understanding of this among the folks. Therefore, creativity in the Indian context appears to be a disciplined intellectual and creative exercise embedded in the social context and heightened by moral and social values (Panda & Yadava, 2005). The emotional, personal and intra-psychic aspects of the human play a major role in creativity (Gulati, 2004).

Is the Indian artist a lone genius?

In Indian texts, the artist has been variously described as *sādhaka*, *mantrin*, or *yogin*. The artist is expected to proceed to a solitary place and follow certain rituals rigidly so that he is able to contact the psychic reality within the depths of self, engage with imagination and work with the help of intuitive knowledge. In other words, the Indian view of creativity has always emphasized the intuitive and imaginative aspects of the process. Maduro (1976) studied 155 traditional painters in Nathwada, India and extended support for a distinct Eastern view of creativity even in modern India. According to this study:

> …the creative artist is one who contacts the psychic reality within the depths of himself — strive(s) to make it manifest, to become one with it, integrating it through differentiation, meditation, and self-realization. In the very real sense, the artist is enjoined to recreate, or reactivate, what is already latent in his unconscious (p. 135).

It seems, the creator, according to Indian texts, is a lone voyager, a counterpart of the concept of 'a lone genius' (as conceived in the Western contemporary literature) in India. However, in the Western conception of lone genius 'social' is treated as a binary opposite and, therefore, undesirable, which is not the case in the Indian situation. The very texts which talk about a lonely inward journey of the artist through *yogic* preparation of the individual (refer to the snippet taken from Buddhist sources cited in Coomaraswamy, 1987) also emphasize possession of social traits like friendliness, compassion, sympathy, and impartiality by a true artist. It presupposes the goodness of the creator, ability to relate to man, nature and the cosmos with a high sensitivity towards these and a desire to either alleviate the man and the world of the miseries or create new metaphysical realities

for humanity. It is also evident in these excerpts that the artist is expected to possess socially desirable skills, high morale, and ability to reflect and use intuitive knowledge.

The following descriptions of a creative individual provided in *śilpa śāśtra* (science of sculpture) further substantiate this point:

> The Shilpan should understand the Atharva Veda, the thirty two Shilpa-shastras, and the Vedic mantras by which the deities are invoked. He should be one who wears a sacred thread, a necklace of holy beads … delighting in worship of God, faithful to his wife, avoiding strange women, piously acquiring a knowledge of various sciences, such a one is indeed a Craftsman (cited in Coomaraswamy, 1987).

In the same text, the painter is described as a '… good man, no sluggard, not given to anger, holy, learned, self-controlled, devout and charitable, such should be his character'.

What is evident here is that the creative product is not evaluated independent of the processes and the social virtues of the creator. The product and the process are not isolated from society and the social processes. They are in fact products of larger social processes where a man's position is not counterpoised with that of the society or the larger social milieu, rather, man and the society exist in a harmonious relationship. More importantly, the artist in his supposedly lone voyage remains in touch with nature and society and maintains a harmoniums relationship with them. So the metaphor of 'lone genius' conceived in the cultural context of individualism in the West does not have a parallel in India.

Anukaraṇa (imitation) and creativity

In Hinduism, creativity is seen as a spiritual or religious state. Maharṣi Mahesh Yogi describes creativity as 'a state of unboundedness that has a biological basis in the relaxed coherent patterns of the nervous system' (Sherr, 1982). The creative processes involve here a complete compliance with the rituals recommended by the relevant texts, surrendering oneself to the almighty, realizing the oneness of self and the cosmic power, and then embarking on spiritual thought and imagination, and finally translating these images into creative products/outputs. It is important to mention here that the valued creative products may not necessarily be innovative solutions to a problem (the way the West presents them). The epic *Rāmāyaṇa* was originally written by Maharṣi Vālmīki. After this, sixteen such texts/epics were written by different authors at different points of time in different Indian languages, describing the same story with some variation in style and content. In Indian Hindu views, each of these texts is considered original. In the area of painting and sculpture, many a time the artists imagine and reproduce the image of Gods and Goddesses. They are treated as pieces of creative art. Instead of *anukaraṇa*, Abhinavagupta introduces *anukīrtana* in the context of creative art in India. According to him *anukīrtana* is not an act of mechanical imitation but an act of aesthetic illumination (*anuvasyasāya*) evoked in the heart of a responsive spectator.

Within each art form in India such as *Madhubanī*, *Paṭṭacitra*, *Pahardi* (folk paintings from Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan respectively) contemporary artists are often found to produce similar kinds of motifs. The dominant themes are related to legends around Gods and nature. The artists are trained to reproduce them using the same styles and themes. The individual artist brings in some variation in colours, styles and themes. But, in large scale production of art, the artists repeat many of their works. In such cases, it appears as if the artists lack originality and copy the style and forms used by senior artists. But, in India, these still continue to enjoy the status of creative work. Each artist is considered creative—some may be more original than others. New forms and new themes are invented by the more original ones, but the bulk of their creative work is repetitive in nature with some variation here and there. Many studies in India reveal that in these artist communities, imitation and repetition are not considered as constraining creative work. They are rather viewed as necessary components of art training and, therefore, valued (if not as much as originality). A similar situation is found in music, performing arts and many other folk arts. Imitation, repetition, novelty, conventionality or unconventional expressions, all form a continuum of creative behaviour. They do not necessarily contradict or constrain each other; they rather complement each other in the art production. Indian society still values both conventional (and repetitive) art forms as well as the non-conventional ones.

It is amply clear that the conceptualization of creativity (and creative processes) is cultural. The Indian view of creativity encompasses the individual, spiritual and social aspects as a fusion. This is also reflected in the folk perception of creativity in India. A study on creativity by Panda and Yadav (2005) revealed that the Indian notion of creativity emphasizes relational, social and interpersonal aspects rather than cognitive, analytical and typical utilitarian aspects of creativity. An empirical analysis of the descriptions of creative people given by Indian young adults revealed the presence of four factors such as 'sociability and social responsibility', 'leadership', 'unconventional personality orientation' and 'task persistence'. Thus, the social and relational aspect of creativity seems to be emphasized in implicit theory of creativity in India.

The cultural perspective raises skepticism about the cross-cultural comparative analyses one finds in the academic literature (mostly Western or biased by the same) on creativity. Hallman (1970) regards the reduced emphasis on originality as the greatest difference between the Indian (Hindu) and Western definitions of creativity. Many African and Asian cultures are regarded as less creative cultures as they emphasize and value normative behaviour, conformity, repetition etc. along with innovation. The Western culture views, on the other hand, value innovation as the sole criterion of creativity. Categorization of Oriental and Western cultures into less or more creative cultures on the basis of parameters valued in individualistic cultures reveals biases and methodological individualism (Purser & Montuori, 2004).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the Western views have promoted a notion of creativity as an individualistic non-conforming innovation. The lone genius stands apart from others and in isolation from social forces. This approach has biased Indian as well as cross-cultural comparative studies of creativity projecting a view of non-western 'collective' cultures as less creative. Borrowing the Western framework as well as the measures of creativity often leads to confirmation of an apparently universal view of the concept. An examination of the traditional Indian texts and thoughts on creative processes shows a perspective that goes beyond the dualistic opposition between the individual and society and between originality and conformity. In the Indian view, creativity is a disciplined intellectual exercise embedded in the social context and heightened by moral and social values. Creativity is not an individualistic utilitarian act; it is a disciplined and value based mental act situated in the cultural context. In this process, the individual and the social are fused together.

The Indian texts discussed briefly in this chapter demonstrate that in Indian art and aesthetics bipolar concepts and phenomena co-exist in the sense that one creates the other or one leads to the other. Since, humans are conceived of as part of nature, it will be far-fetched, especially in the area of creativity, to assume bipolarity of concepts or phenomena. Western cultures and, more specifically, the American culture should have been no exception. But the construct creativity grew in American culture in the context of individualism. It is difficult to argue that in any society, creative work is the product of lone genius. In fact, group work and innovations are more a norm than an exception in America (Purser & Cabana, 1998). If that is the dominant reality in America, it is theoretically untenable to argue and justify the individual focus in creativity research. In fact, a few recent scholars' claim that individualism in America is a political project and not a social reality (Purser & Cabana, 1998) appears to be more convincing.

The Indian conception of creativity needs to be explored by systematically examining the Indian literary and aesthetic theories as well as the folk notion of creativity in contemporary times. The heuristic value of such conceptions for explaining creative behaviour in contemporary India could be established by undertaking a few empirical works without necessarily counterposing it to Western theories.

It is, indeed, important to mention here that creative expressions include activities like art, craft, music, dance and many more activities than just innovation in the area of science and technology. The technologically less-advanced collectivistic societies of the Eastern world show ample creativity in art, craft, music or dance. It is important to note here that while in the technologically advanced Western societies innovation and creativity are market driven, in developing societies these art forms survive without much of regular market support. In the area of science and technology, the phenomenal growth in the population of computer professionals, scientists, doctors, engineers in the supposedly structured and

traditional value driven societies like India, China, Korea and other Asian nations in the last fifty years (who have made certain developments in the digitalized Western societies possible) cannot be entirely explained by the market forces in the respective countries, nor could these be entirely explained by the opening up of the world economy in the recent past. There is probably something else these societies or cultures (rather all societies) have that support innovation and creativity, and that cannot be explained fully using currently available Western individualistic theories, nor even by the supposedly more progressive framework of Greenfield et al. (2003). It is, therefore, worthwhile to explore the cultural models of creativity that underlie the educational and work practices in these countries.

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Glossary of words of Sanskrit or Pali origin

For abbreviations, see list at the end of the Glossary

abhidhamma (Pali), 'abhidharma' (Sanskrit), the Buddhist philosophy.

abhva, nescience, non-being; usually translated as 'terrible', 'monstrous' etc.

ācārya, a teacher, a spiritual guide who knows what to do and how to proceed, from *ācāra*, 'practice'.

adbhuta, transcendental, beyond being/becoming, 'wonderful'.

adharma, that which is not upholding existence, a-*dharma*, or not in accordance with *dharma* (see '*dharma*').

aditi, infinite Consciousness, the divine Mother, the mother of the godheads named Ādityas; in the later philosophical language she is known as *parā prakṛti* (*Gītā* etc.).

āditya, a solar deity, a child of the Infinity, Aditi; there are seven original Ādityas mentioned in the *Veda* (see '*āditya-gaṇa*'); in the later literature it is used as the name of the Sun.

āditya-gaṇa, the group of solar deities, children of Aditi: Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Dakṣa, Aṃśa, Sūrya or Savitṛ; later there were mentioned a few more: Indra, Viṣṇu, Dhātṛ etc., the number of which grows up to 12 in the later literature of *Brāhmaṇas* symbolising the Sun in the 12 months of the year (ŚBr 4.5.7.2 etc.).

ādityas, see '*āditya-gaṇa*'.

adri, rock of Inconscient, a thunderbolt of Indra, a pressing stone of Soma as the delight of Existence.

advaita, non-dualistic, unique, monistic, identity of spirit and matter.

āgama, a tradition handed down; Tantra of the Śaiva and Śākta traditions.

agni, a sacrificial fire; universal godhead growing within the creation, incarnating and manifesting the gods.

ahambhāva, see '*ahaṃkāra*'.

ahaṁkāra, ego-sense; lit. 'saying or making "I"'; conception of one's individuality, self-consciousness (ChaUp etc.); the making of self, thinking of self, egotism (MBh etc.); the third of the eight sources of creation; the conception of individuality, individualization (in Sāṁkhya phil.).

ahiṁsā, non-violence, lit. 'absence of the desire to hurt'.

aitareya, prop. name of *ṛṣi*; son of Itarā, he is known as Mahīdāsa Aitareya, the author of the *Ṛg Vedic* tradition of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Upaniṣad*.

ājñā, a command, an order; the fifth *cakra* in *sūkṣma śarīra*, subtle body, located in-between the eye brows, the *cakra* of will power, known as the third eye.

ājñāna, one of the four major faculties of consciousness, the operation by which consciousness dwells on an image of things so as to hold, govern and possess it in power (see '*prajñāna*').

akarma, not working, not active, inactivity, passivity (see the discussion about it in the *Gītā* 4.16).

akṣara, 'imperishable', sound or syllable AUM. In the eighth chapter of the *Gītā*: *akṣara* and *kṣara puruṣa*: imperishable and perishable spirit.

amṛta, immortal, immortality, the nectar of immortality.

aṃśa, N. of one of the seven Ādityas; lit. 'a portion of the divine'; a soul created for the sake of manifestation on the Supramental plane.

ānanda, bliss, the transcendental Bliss as a

part and result of relation of *sat* and *cit*, divine Being and Consciousness.

anāsakta, unattached, free.

anāsakti, nonattachment.

anasūyā, absence of ill-will or envy.

anātman, not self, another, 'having no self', 'something different from spirit or soul'.

annamaya, material, lit. 'made of matter'.

annamayapuruṣa, 'self of material body', *puruṣa* made out of matter (TaitUp 2).

antaḥkaraṇa, the internal organ, the seat of thought and feeling, the mind, the thinking faculty, the heart, the conscience, the soul.

antarātman, the inner self, the psychic being (SA), the soul, the internal feelings, the heart or mind (MaitrS etc.).

antarikṣa, the space between heaven and earth; the internal space of life, vital plane of consciousness.

āpaḥ, cosmic waters, running waters; waters of the lower Ocean (AitUp 1.1.2); waters from which *puruṣa* was made (AitUp 1.1.3).

aparā, lit. 'not higher', 'lower' nature.

artha, aim, purpose, meaning, reason, object, thing, wealth etc.

aryaman, one of the seven Ādityas, always mentioned together with Mitra and Varuṇa; the light of the divine Consciousness working as Force (SA).

āsana, lit. 'sitting'; sitting in a particular posture (eighty-four postures are mentioned, such as: *padmāsana*, *bhadrāsana*, *vajrāsana*, *vīrāsana*, *svastikāsana* etc.).

asmitā, lit. 'I-ness', egoism.

āśrama, a hermitage, a place in the forest for ascetics and sages to live; four major periods in the life of a *Brahmin*: *brahmacārin*, 'the student of the *Veda*'; *gṛhastha*, 'the household'; *vānaprastha*, 'living in the woods'; *sannyāsin*, 'the ascetic'.

asura, lit. '*asu-ra*', 'having power of being'; *asu* is a power of existence. In the *Veda* the great godheads, such as Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, Agni, Indra etc., are called *Asuras*. They have their own power of existence. In the later literature this power to endure was assigned to the spirits of the lower hemisphere only, to the demons and the whole interpretation of the word has changed into a-*sura*, lit. 'no light'. In the *Purāṇas*, *Asuras* are the elder brothers of the gods and are in constant battle with them. *Asuras* belong to the first stage of creation, the fall of the Spirit, and therefore are older and stronger than gods in the field of manifestation. Gods belong to the second stage of creation, who came down to upraise the fallen spirits.

asūyā, envy, jealousy.

aśva, lit. 'swift', 'fast' from *āśu*; a horse; in the *Veda* the symbol of energy, mainly vital energy; as in comparison with *go*, 'cow', which is the symbol of light of knowledge. These two constitute the most desired wealth symbolising Knowledge and Power sought after by men.

aśvins, *aśvinā du.*, lit. 'two charioteers', two gods, who come in a golden chariot in the sky before dawn; they bring treasures and cure illnesses; they are known as the physicians of heaven (RV).

atharva-veda, the fourth *Veda* (said to have been composed by Atharvan, and consisting chiefly of formulas and spells intended to counteract diseases and calamities).

ātma-bhāva, lit. 'becoming of the Self'; existence of the soul (ŚvetUp); (in Buddhism) the self, proper or peculiar nature; the body.

ātmabodha, lit. 'knowledge of the Self'; the work of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya.

ātman, the self; the soul, the principle of life; used often as the word 'self' is used in English; distinguished from and one with *Brahman*, universal Spirit. When *Brahman* becomes self-aware it is distinguished as *ātman*. *Ātman* has three major poises: 1) *Paramātman*, the supreme universal Self, 2) *Ātman*, the supreme individualised Self, unborn and everpresent and 3) *Antarātman*, the individual soul involved in manifestation, the evolving Psychic Being (SA).

avatāra, lit. 'descending down', incarnation of a deity on earth; 10 *avatāras* of Viṣṇu are well-known.

avidyā, lit. 'not knowing', 'not finding', searching but not finding; partial knowledge as compared to *vidyā*, 'full knowledge'; ignorance; partial knowledge in time and space (ĪśUp 9-11).

āyatanas, resting-place, support, seat, place, home, house, abode, (TS, ChaUp, AitBr, Mn etc.); the place of the sacred fire (= *agny-āyatana*) (KātyŚr, ĀśvŚr and Gṛ); an

altar; (in Buddhism) the five senses and *manas* (considered as the inner seats or *āyatanas*) and the qualities perceived by the above (the outer *āyatanas*).

āyurveda, the science of health or medicine (it is classed among sacred sciences, and considered as a supplement of the *Atharva-veda*).

bādarāyaṇa, N. of several teachers and authors (esp. of a sage identified with Vyāsa, said to be the author of the *Vedānta-sūtras*; of an astronomer; of the author of a *Dharma-śāstra* etc.)

bhaga, a Bliss; from the root *bhaj*, 'to share the enjoyment'; one of the seven Ādityas; a solar deity, a godhead representing bliss in the *Veda*.

bhagavad-gītā, lit. '*The Song of the Blissful Lord* (Kṛṣṇa)'.

bhāgavata, lit. 'about the Blissful Lord (Kṛṣṇa)'; N. of one of the major *Purāṇas*.

bhakta, lit. 'shared', or 'whose joy is shared', implying 'with the Lord'; a devotee.

bhakti, lit. 'sharing', implying 'joy with the Lord'; devotion, devotional love.

bhaktiyoga, 'the *yoga* or union with the Divine through love and devotion'.

bhāva, lit. 'a state of being'; can be any state of emotion, feeling etc., in the later literature means mainly the emotion.

bhaya, fear.

bhīma, lit. 'fearful', terrible etc.

bhoktā, 'the enjoyer'; phil. the one who partakes of all the happenings, sacrifices or offerings (see '*adhiyajña*' in the *Gītā*).

bhū, 'earth', lit. 'a level of being/becoming'.

bhūmīḥ, 'earths'; *tisro bhūmīḥ*, 'three earths' are supporting the three spaces, *trī rajāṃsi*, which support the three heavens, *tisro dyāvaḥ*, which are projected from the three luminous worlds of *Svar*, *trī rocanā*, which are the product of the triple power of the Supermind, *tri aryamā* (RV 5.29.1).

bhūta, lit. 'that which has become', ppp. from root *bhū*, to become, to be; 'the past', 'creature which is born on earth'; an element, there are five great elements, *pañca mahābhūtāni*, known as ether, air, fire, water, earth: *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, *agni*, *āpaḥ*, *pṛthivī* (TaitUp 2.1); a spirit (good or evil), the ghost of a deceased person, a demon etc. (Up, Mn etc.); see also '*ādhibhautika*'.

bodhisattvas, m. 'one whose being is awakened', one who is on the way to the attainment of perfect knowledge (i.e. a Buddhist saint when he has only one birth to undergo before obtaining the state of a supreme *Buddha* and then *Nirvāṇa*). The early doctrine had only one *bodhi-sattva*, viz. Maitreya; the later reckoned many more.

brahma, Nom. from *brahman* n.; *Veda*, lit. 'expanding one', a *mantra* rising from the heart, the lord of which is Brahmaṇaspati, the *Guru* of the gods in the *Veda*. In the later literature Brahma is the all-embracing Spirit.

brahmā, Nom. from *brahman* m.; lit. 'the speaker of *brahma*, a *mantra*'; a priest in the sacrificial ceremonies; 'a creator' known in the later literature as Prajāpati; in the *Purāṇas* he is spoken of as part of the divine Trinity of Brahmā-Viṣṇu-Śiva, Creator-Preserver-Destroyer.

brāhmaṇa, n. *Brahmanic* literature (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, *Kauṣitaki Brāhmaṇa* etc.); m. a person in the *varṇa* of *brāhmaṇa*, *Brahmin*.

brahmāsmi, one of the *mahāvākya* of the *Upaniṣads*: 'I am Brahman'.

bṛhadāraṇyaka, N. of *Upaniṣad*, which is a part of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* of *Śukla Yajurveda*.

buddhaghoṣa, N. of a Buddhist scholar, who lived at the beginning of the 5th century A.D.

buddhi, f. reason, intellect (Mn, MBh etc.); comprehension, apprehension, understanding. The second *tattva* of 25 *tattvas* of Sāṁkhya philosophy; the higher mind as distinguished from the sense-mind, *manas*.

caitanya, lit. 'conscious'; soul, spirit; N. of a reformer of the Vaishnava tradition (1485 AD).

caitya, (fr. cit) the individual soul (BhP iii, 26); the Psychic Being (SA), see '*antarātman*'.

cakra, wheel, discus; there are seven *cakras* in the *sūkṣma śarīra*, these are *sahasrāra*, *ājñā*, *viśuddha*, *anāhata*, *maṇipūra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *mūlādhāra*.

cārvāka, N. of a materialistic philosopher (whose doctrines are embodied in the *Bārhaspatya-sūtras*).

cetana, percipient, conscious, sentient,

intelligent; soul, mind; (*ā*) f. consciousness, understanding, sense, intelligence.

chāndogya, doctrine of the *chando-gas*, 'the singers in meters'; a *Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāma Veda* (incl. the ChaUp).

cit, thought, intellect, spirit, soul; pure Thought; the divine Consciousness.

citra, conspicuous, excellent, distinguished; clear (a sound); luminous, shining with the divine Consciousness (RV).

cit-śakti, the power of Consciousness or 'Consciousness-force'.

citta, lit. 'noticed', 'perceived', 'realised in consciousness'; the stuff of consciousness realised as memory.

citta-vṛtti, state of mind, feeling, emotion; continuous course of thoughts (opposed to concentration), thinking, imagining.

cūḍāmaṇi, lit. 'a jewel worn by men and women on the top of the head' (MBh); N. of the work of Śaṅkarācārya.

daiva, lit. 'belonging to or coming from the gods'; divine, celestial; depending on fate, fatal.

dakṣa, one of the seven Ādityas; represents the power of Thought, the all-discerning and all-distributing power of the divine Mind (SA).

dānavas, a class of demons often distinguished from or identified with the *daityas* or *asuras*, the enemies of the gods or *devās*; children of Danu and Kaśyapa, sometimes numbered as 40 (MBh), sometimes as 100.

darśana, lit. 'view'; 6 major philosophical systems: Pūrva-Mīmānsā by Jaimini, Uttara-Mīmānsā by Bādarāyaṇa, Nyāya by Gotama, Vaiśeṣika by Kaṇāda, Sāṁkhya by Kapila, Yoga by Patañjali.

dehin, lit. 'one who has a body', corporeal, man, a soul.

devās, gods, divine beings; lit. 'shining beings' from root *div*, to shine.

dhamma, (Pali) *dharma*.

dhammapada, Buddhist treatise on *dharma* (3rd century BC).

dhāraṇā, lit. 'holding', 'concentrating (mind upon)'; the sixth stage of Patañjali Yoga before *dhyāna*, 'meditation'.

dhārmika, lit. 'following *dharma*', right, just etc.

dhātu, lit. 'an establishment or placement' from root *dhā*; a basic layer, stratum, constituent part, ingredient; element, such as *mahābhūta* or a constituent element of the body or primary element of the earth; in gram. a verbal root or stem.

dhī, thought, esp. religious thought, reflection, meditation, devotion, prayer; pl. holy thoughts personified (RV); understanding, intelligence, wisdom; personified as the wife of Rudra-Manyu (BhP).

dhṛtarāṣtra, N. of a king who was the eldest son of Vyāsa by the widow of Vicitravīrya, born blind, brother of Pāṇḍu and Vidura, husband of Gāndhāri and father of 100 sons of whom the eldest was Duryodhana (MBh).

dhṛti, lit. 'holding steady' from the root *dhṛ*, to hold; steadfastness, steadiness, firmness etc.

dhyāna, meditation, thought, reflection; the seventh stage of Patañjali Yoga before *samādhi*; (in Buddhism) divided into 4 stages.

diti, lit. 'dividing'; in the *Veda* the Creatrix of a lower hemisphere of darkness and division in opposition to Aditi, the infinite Consciousness-Power; in the Epics daughter of Dakṣa and wife of Kaśyapa and mother of the Daityas; the Maruts are also described as her progeny.

dṛṣṭi, from root *dṛś*, to see; a vision, revelation, direct knowledge.

duḥkha, lit. 'difficult or spoilt space'; suffering, sorrow, pain.

durgā, lit. 'the inaccessible or terrific [goddess]', N. of the daughter of Himavat and wife of Śiva.

dvaita, lit. 'dualism, duality'.

dveṣa, hatred, dislike.

dyaus, lit. 'shining one' from root *div*, to shine; heaven, sky, in the *Vedas* the father of all creatures whereas the earth, *pṛthivī*, is the mother; very often the *dvandva* is used: *dyāvapṛthivī*, heaven and earth, indicating the higher and lower hemispheres of the world, many times called as *rodasī*, 'two shining ones'; when used in feminine gender they indicate the mental and physical being (SA).

dyāvaḥ, heavens; in the *Veda* three heavens are mentioned, *tisro dyāvaḥ*, 'two are in the world of Savitṛ and one in the world of Yama' (RV 1.35.6).

ekāgratā, lit. 'onepointedness', concentration, the state of absorption.

garbha, the inside; a fetus or embryo, child (RV, AV); *hiraṇya-garbha*, 'the golden child', 'the golden embryo', is a symbol of the divinity growing within its own manifestation.
gāyatrī, lit. 'a song', from root *gai*, 'to sing'; in poetry it is a meter consisting of three *padas*, each of eight syllables, mainly of iambic character; a sacred verse repeated by every *brāhmaṇa* in his morning and evening prayers to Savitṛ, the Sun-god, it is also called Sāvitrī; personified as a goddess, the wife of Brahmā and mother of the four *Vedas* (Hariv).
gītā, lit. 'a song', ppp. of root *gai*, 'to sing'; *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the song of the Blissful Lord (Śri Kṛṣṇa).
gotra, lit. 'enclosure for the cows', a family, family name, lineage; all *brāhmaṇas* are supposed to have a *gotra* descending from the ancient sages such as Gautama, Kaśyapa, Bharadvāja etc.
gṛhastha, lit. 'staying home', a household; the second *āśrama* in the life of a *brāhmaṇa*, the period of marriage.
ghṛta, lit. 'clarified butter', *ghee*; the symbol of mental clarity (SA).
guṇa, a single thread or strand of a cord or rope; a garland, a bow-string; the string of a musical instrument, chord; subdivision, species, kind; a quality; an attribute of the 5 elements; (in Sāṁkhya phil.) three major qualities of *prakṛti*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, i.e. tranquillity, activity and inertia; (in Nyāya phil.) a property or characteristic of all created things.

harṣa, (from root *hṛṣ*) excitement, erection (esp. of the hair in a thrill of rapture or delight); joy, pleasure, happiness (also personified as a son of *dharma*).
hāsa, laughter, a joke.
hāsya, lit. 'laughable', funny, comical etc.
haṭhayoga, lit. '*yoga* of persistence'.
hetu, a motive, a reason, a course, a manner.
hiraṇya, gold, golden.
hrī, modesty, shyness; also personified as daughter of Dakṣa and wife of Dharma.

icchā, wish, desire.
ilā, the river in the *Veda*, the current of the Word; the power of Revelation (SA); a name for the earth.
indra, the Lord of the Divine Mind (SA), who in the *Veda* with his striking Lightning destroys all the demons: Vṛtra, Vala, Śuṣṇa etc.
indriya, lit. 'the power of Indra', cognitive faculty of consciousness, sense: hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell, known in Sāṁkhya as *jñānendriyās*, the senses of cognition corresponding with five elements: *pañca mahābhūtāni*: *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, *agni*, *āpaḥ*, *pṛthivī*.
īrṣya, envy or jealousy.
īś, master, lord.
iṣṭa-devatā, desired, chosen (deity). The deity to whom the sacrifice is normally offered; the preferred deity of the family.
īśvara, master, lord, king; the Lord of Creation manifesting himself through his *Śakti* with no difference between Him and Her (SA).

jāgrat, lit. 'waking', a waking state of consciousness; there are also *svapna*, a sleeping state with dreams, *suṣupti*, a sleeping state without dreams and the transcendental state of *turīya* (MāṇḍUp 3-5).
jāti, lit. 'birth'; position by birth, lineage, cast, family, kind, class, species etc.
jijñāsā, lit. 'desire to know or realize oneself'.
jijñāsu, lit. 'one who desires to know or realize oneself'.
jīva, lit. 'living being', from root *jīv*, 'to live'; the principle of life, the living or personal soul (as distinguished from the universal soul, see '*jīvātman*'); the individual soul involved in manifestation.
jīvātman, the living individual soul, not involved in manifestation but present as witness from above, distinct from the *paramātman* or universal soul.
jñāna, lit. 'knowledge', 'self-realization' (SA); there are many types of self-realization of consciousness: *saṃjñāna*, *ājñāna*, *vijñāna*, *prajñāna* (AitUp 3).
jñānayoga, the *yoga* of knowledge; the last six chapters of the *Gītā*.
jñānī, lit. 'the knower'.
jugupsā, dislike, disgust.

kāla, time, a measure of time.
kāma, (fr. *kam*), wish, desire, longing; desire for, longing after (gen. dat., or loc.), love, affection, object of desire or of love or of pleasure; pleasure, enjoyment, love, especially sexual love or sensuality; N. of

the god of love (in *Purāṇas* represented as son of Dharma and husband of Rati). In the *yogic* literature it is considered to be one of the major enemies of the *yogin* (BhG etc.) together with *krodha*, anger, and *moha*, bewilderment.

kāraṇa, lit. 'what causes to do'; a cause, reason; motive, origin, principle; an element.

karman, lit. 'work'; from root *kṛ*, 'to do'; duty, occupation; any religious act or rite; labour, activity; product, result, effect etc. In linguistics it is the second *kāraka* of Accusative case, indicating an object of action. In the *Vedic* literature it mainly means a 'sacrificial action', for the sacrifice in general was seen as the only right action to be performed here in the lower hemisphere, which is to accommodate the higher powers of consciousness (the gods) into the narrow life of Ignorance and thus to transform it into its higher prototype.

karmayoga, *yoga* of works; the first six chapters of the BhG describe it in great detail; according to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the long forgotten path of the Ancients, where the dynamic way of self-discovery and self-realization was accepted as the most efficient way to reach the Divine. There are three major liberations in *karmayoga*: 1) freedom from the fruit of action; 2) freedom from attachment to any particular action; and 3) freedom from the notion of the doer.

kartā, lit. 'a doer'; in linguistics the first *kāraka* of the Nominative Case.

karuṇa, pity, compassion.

kḷeśa, pain, affliction, distress; (in Yoga) five *kleśas*: *a-vidyā*, 'ignorance', *asmi-tā*, 'egotism', *rāga*, 'desire', *dveṣa*, 'aversion', and *abhiniveśa*, 'tenacity of mundane existence'; (in Buddhism) ten: three of the body (murder, theft, adultery), four of speech (lying, slander, abuse, unprofitable conversation), three of the mind (covetousness, malice, skepticism).

kṣara, lit. 'perishable', 'what is melting away', in opposition to '*akṣara*', imperishable. In the *Gītā kṣara puruṣa* and *akṣara puruṣa* are mentioned. *Kṣara* represents the world of becoming where nothing is permanent, whereas *akṣara* the transcendental world of permanent existence.

kṣetrajña, lit. 'a knower of the field', the embodied soul, the indwelling spirit.

kuṇḍalinī, lit. 'a coiling one'; in Tantra the power hidden in the *mūlādhāra cakra* coiling in three (or sometimes in three and a half) coils, which, when awakened, rises to the *sahasrāra cakra*, opening on her way all the *cakras* in the *sūkṣma-śarīra*, to meet and to unite with her Lord, Śiva, seated above in *sahasrāra cakra*. *Mahākuṇḍalinī* is the *mahāśakti* which is descending from above (*sahasrāra cakra*) and opens all the *cakras* one by one from above (SA).

kutsa, N. of a legendary *ṛṣi* of the *Ṛg Veda* (Book 1), who is driving in the chariot with Indra.

kuṭumbaka, family.

lakṣaṇa, lit. 'indication', characteristic, a mark, sign, symbol, token, attribute, quality; definition, illustration etc.

laukika, lit. 'belonging to the world', worldly, common, habitual, not sacred (in opposition to *vaidika* etc.).

līlā, a play, amusement, 'child's play', pretence, disguise; in the Vaiṣṇava tradition it is the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa which creates the world.

liṅga, a mark, characteristic; the male organ or phallus; in ling. 'gender'; the image of a god, an idol.

loka, lit. 'shining [space]'; from root *ruc*, 'to shine'; in the *Veda u-loka* or *uru-loka*, *ava-loka*, 'the vast world' is mentioned; country, world; in the *Purāṇas* seven *lokas* are mentioned: *bhūrloka*, the earth; *bhuvarloka*, the space between heaven and earth, the sky, inhabited by *siddhas*; *svarloka*, the heaven above the Sun and below the Polar Star, Indra's kingdom; *maharloka*, the great world above the Polar Star, inhabited by Bhargavas and other *ṛṣis*; *janarloka*, the world of Bliss, *ānanda*; *taparloka*, the world of Consciousness-Force, *tapas*; *satyaloka*, the world of the divine Existence, *sat*.

lokāyata, (*śāstra* or *mata* or *tantra*) materialism, the system of atheistic philosophy taught by Cārvāka.

madhyamaka, or '*mādhyamika*' lit. 'middle', 'middlemost'; N. of a Buddhist school.

mahābhārata, epic of the Bhāratas.

mahārasa, lit. 'great essence'.

maharṣi, a great *ṛṣi*.

mahas, lit. 'the great [world]'; the fourth

world of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, the world of *Brahman*, known as *Vijñāna*, translated by Sri Aurobindo as 'Supermind'.

mahātmā, lit. 'a great soul'; the soul of the Universe in the *Upaniṣads*; noble man.

mahāvākya, lit. 'a great statement' in the *Upaniṣads*; 12 *mahāvākyas* are mentioned, such as: *tat tvam asi*, 'you are That', *ahaṃ brahmāsmi*, 'I am Brahman', *sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ brahma*, 'all indeed is *Brahman*' etc.

mahāyāna, lit. 'great path', or 'great vehicle' (opp. to *hīnayāna*); N. of the later system of Buddhist teaching by Nāgārjuna in the *Mahā-yāna-sūtras*.

maheśa, lit. 'great lord', N. of Śiva.

mahī, lit. 'great one', N. of the Earth; in the *Veda* in duality 'heaven and earth', cp. to *rodasī*.

mamakāra, lit. 'saying "my"'; selfishness; interest in oneself.

manana, lit. 'thinking'.

manas, sense-mind or mind (in its widest sense as applied to all the mental powers), intellect, intelligence, understanding, perception, sense, will (RV etc.); in philosophy the internal organ or *antaḥkaraṇa* of perception and cognition, the faculty or instrument through which thoughts enter or by which objects of sense affect the soul; in this sense *manas* is always regarded as distinct from *ātman* and *puruṣa*, 'self or soul' and belongs only to the body. In RV sometimes joined with *hṛd* or *hṛdaya*, the heart; or with *cakṣus*, the eye; thought, imagination, reflection, opinion, intention, inclination, affection, desire, temper, spirit.

manomaya puruṣa, lit. '*puruṣa* made out of *manas*', the self of mind, mental being, mental self in man; in the system of five *puruṣas* it is the third puruṣa (TaitUp).

māruta-gaṇa, lit. 'the host of Maruts'.

marut, usually in pl., prob. the 'flashing or shining ones'; the storm-gods (Indra's companions; said in the *Veda* to be the sons of Rudra and Pṛśni, or the children of heaven or of ocean; and described as armed with golden weapons, lightnings and thunderbolts, as having iron teeth and roaring like lions, as residing in the north, as riding in golden cars drawn by ruddy horses; in the later literature they are the children of Diti, either seven or seven times seven in number, and are sometimes said to be led by Mātariśvan).

mati, lit. 'thought'; worship, hymn, sacred utterance (RV, VS); intention, determination, inclination, wish, desire; opinion, notion, idea, belief, conviction, view, creed; the mind, perception, understanding, intelligence, sense, judgment.

māyā, lit. 'creative power', 'measuring power'; in the *Vedas* it is a 'power manifesting the Supreme'; later in the post-*Vedic* literature an 'illusion'.

māyāvāda, the doctrine of *Māyā*, based on the belief that the material world is an illusion, asserting the permanence of the Spirit, and the temporality of material creation, *brahma satyaṃ jaganmithyā*, (Śrī Śaṅkarācārya).

medhā, mental vigour or power, intelligence, prudence, wisdom, (RV. etc.).

mīmāṁsā, lit. 'desire or wish to think over'; an examination of the *Vedic* texts, having two great divisions *Pūrva Mīmāṁsā* or *Karma Mīmāṁsā* by Jaimini, and *Uttara Mīmāṁsā* or *Brahma Mīmāṁsā* (*Brahma sūtras*) by Bādarāyaṇa with Śaṅkara's commentaries which constitutes Advaita Vedānta, known also as Śaṅkara Mīmāṁsā.

mokṣa, liberation, ultimate emancipation, (see '*mukti*').

mūḍha, lit. 'unconscious', 'bewildered'; ppp. from *muh*, to become unconscious.

mukti, liberation, from *muc* 'to free'; setting or becoming free, release, liberation; final liberation or emancipation, final beatitude (= *mokṣa*). The concept of *mukti* is changing over the period of time from the *Vedic* understanding, where *mukti* is only a condition for a more effective action in manifestation of a freed spirit, to the concept of *mukti* where the manifestation itself is seen as an ultimate prison which is to be gotten rid of altogether as soon as possible (Māyāvāda doctrine).

mūlādhāra, lit. 'the foundation of the root of being', the lowest *cakra* in the *sūkṣmaśarīra* (see '*cakra*').

mumukṣutvam, lit. 'a tendency towards freedom', a desire to be free.

muni, a sage, seer, monk etc.

nadī, a river, a stream of water, also of heavenly waters; a symbol of the heavenly currents entering our being here, known as muse in the Greek literature; such rivers as Sarasvatī, I ā, Mahī, are

those spiritual currents which bring in the Inspired Word and Revelation of its meaning and the greatness of its power and vision. Seven rivers are mentioned in the *Veda* as those supporting our sevenfold existence here with the currents of their true energies.

nāma, a name, a characteristic mark or sign, form, nature, kind, manner (RV, VS, AV); name, appellation (RV); in ling. a noun (as opp. to a verb) (Nir); substance, essence (in the Mīmānsā phil. opp. to *guṇa*, as accidental quality). In the *Upaniṣads* it is that which presents the being in its proper meaning and purpose, whereas *rūpa*, form, addresses its formal manifestation.

nara, a man, a hero, an individual soul, (from *nṛ*); in the *Veda nṛ* is the power of the soul, which is assigned to different gods and godheads in their sacrificial actions. Many great gods, such as Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Maruts etc. are called by this name *nṛ*, expecially when they are participating or expected to participate in the sacrifice.

nārada, N. of a sage, known as *deva-ṛṣi*, the divine *Ṛṣi*.

naraka-loka, hell (distinguished from *pātāla*); people of hell.

nara-loka, lit. 'the world of men'; earth or people of earth.

nārāyaṇa, N. of Viṣṇu; the universal Soul, whereas *nara* is the individual soul.

nāṭyaśāstra, a treatise of *nāṭya*, drama, by sage Bharata.

nibbāna (Pali), see '*nirvāṇa*'.

nididhyāsana, profound and repeated meditation (*Vedāntas*); from Desir. of *nidhyai*, 'to think over in depth'.

nidrā, lit. 'deep sleep'; from *ni-drā*, 'to fall deep into sleep'.

niḥsvabhāva, lit. 'without one's own characteristic or essential nature'; want of property, poverty; void of peculiarities etc.

nimitta, from *ni-mā* 'to measure totally'; mark, target, sign, omen; cause, motive, ground, reason; (in philosophy) instrumental or efficient cause; opp. to *upādāna*, the operative or material cause (*Vedāntas*).

nindā, hate, blame, defamation, outrage.

nirguṇa, void of qualities, or beyond any qualities; when applied to *Brahman*, Spirit, it means 'pure Spirit', which is beyond manifestation, in opposition to *sa-guṇa brahma*, 'spirit with qualities', or *ananta-guṇa brahma*, 'spirit of infinite qualities' (SA).

nirvāṇa, lit. 'extinguished state', 'without a breath'; from *nir-vā*, 'to blow out', to live without life, as it were; a state of ultimate peace in which the whole world is seen as unreal, as if in a movie (SA); the ultimate goal of Buddhism and Jainism as an absolute extinction or annihilation (= *śūnya*) of individual existence or of all desires and passions; perfect calm or repose or happiness, highest bliss or beatitude.

nirvikalpa, lit. 'without any modification'; not admitting an alternative, free from change or differences; there are two major kinds of *samādhi*, *sa-vikalpa*, including temporal modulations, and *nir-vikalpa*, excluding all temporal modulations of consciousness, which is considered to be the highest.

niṣkāma, lit. 'without desire'; desireless, disinterested, unselfish.

niṣprapañca, subject to no expansion or manifoldness.

niṣṭhā, lit. 'totally stable'; situated within.

nitya, one's own; continual, perpetual, eternal (RV); constantly dwelling or engaged in, intent upon.

nivṛtti, returning, ceasing; disappearance; leaving off, ceasing from worldly acts, inactivity, rest, repose.

niyama, lit. 'fixed rule' or 'vow'; the second stage in the eightfold discipline of Yoga: *yama-niyama-āsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo aṣṭāva aṅgāni* (YS 2.29); five *yamas* are: *ahiṃsā-asatya-asteya-brahmacarya-aparigrahā yamāḥ* (YS 2.30); and five *niyamas*: *śaucha-santoṣa-tapaḥsvādhyāya-īśvarapraṇidhānāni niyamāḥ* (YS 2.32).

nṛtya, dancing, acting.

nyāya, lit. 'going to the bottom of things', a logic; an original type, method, rule, esp. a general or universal rule, system; a logical or syllogistic argument or inference, consisting of five members: *pratijñā* (a proposition), *hetu* (an argument, deduction, or reason for an inference), *udāharaṇa* (example), *upanaya* (application), *nigamana* (conclusion); a system of philosophy delivered by Gotama or Gautama (see also '*darśana*').

padmapāda, lit. 'lotus-foot'.

pañcālī, a doll.

pañcaskandha, the 5 *skandhas* or constituent elements in Buddhism: *rūpa*, 'bodily form'; *vedanā*, 'sensation'; *saṃjñā*, 'perception'; *saṃskāra*, 'aggregate of formations'; *vijñāna*, 'consciousness or thought-faculty'.

pāpa, bad, wicked, evil, low; sin, crime, guilt etc.

parā, lit. 'beyond', 'transcendent'; supreme.

parama, see '*parā*'.

paramahaṁsa, lit. 'transcendental swan', 'the supreme soul', the ascetic of the highest order.

paramātman, lit. 'transcendental self', 'the supreme universal Self' as in opposition to the individual self which is *ātman*, or *jīvātman*, 'unborn or uninvolved individual self' or *antarātman*, 'an involved individual self'.

paramparā, a tradition; an uninterrupted lineage, succession, continuation.

paśu-loka, 'the world of creatures who can see/perceive', the animal world in general.

patañjali, N. of the author of *Yogasūtras*; N. of the author of *Mahābhāṣya* on *Pāṇini Aṣṭādhyāyī* (2 cent. BC).

pitaraḥ, 'the forefathers', ancestors; both of individuals and of mankind. In the *Veda* they abide in the third heaven, in the post *Vedic* literature they live in the *Bhuvas* world, between heaven and earth.

pracetas, lit. 'having consciousness fixed forward', attentive etc. In the *Veda* it is an equivalent of the later *prajñāna*, the apprehensive consciousness which holds an image of things to enter and to know it by analytic and synthetic cognition (SA).

prajñā, 'discrimination', 'knowledge by apprehending cognition'; wisdom etc.

prajñāna, one of the four major operations of consciousness, *saṃjñāna*, *ājñāna*, *vijñāna*, *prajñāna*, mentioned in *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (3.2); according to Sri Aurobindo:

Samjnana, *the sense of an object in its image; inbringing movement of apprehensive consciousness… as to possess it in conscious substance, to feel it* (to be it, to have an experience of it, to be directly identified with it in oneself).

Ajnana, *the possession of it in power; it dwells on an image of things so as to hold, govern and possess it in power* (to become one Self with it).

Vijnana, *the comprehension of it in knowledge; holds an image of things at once in its essence, its totality and its parts and properties* (to be one Consciousness with it in the totality of its relations).

Prajnana, *the apprehension of it in knowledge follows; the outgoing of apprehensive consciousness* (*of Knowledge*) *to possess its object in conscious energy, to know it* (to understand it, to see it, to be aware of it in one's consciousness).

prakāśa, lit. 'light', 'shining forward'; illumination, elucidation; clear etc.

prakṛti, lit. 'making or placing before or at first', the original or natural form or condition of anything, original or primary substance; cause, original source; nature, character etc.; (in Sāṁkhya phil.) 'the original producer' of the material world (consisting of 3 constituent essences or *guṇas* called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*); Nature as distinguished from *puruṣa*, Spirit, just as *Māyā* is distinguished from *Brahman* in the Vedānta.

prāṇa, lit. 'breath'; there are five major *prāṇas*: *prāṇa*, 'breathing in', *apāna*, 'breathing out', *vyāna*, 'pervading breath', *samāna*, 'equalizing breath', *udāna*, 'rising up breath'.

prāṇamaya puruṣa, lit. 'self made out of vital', the self of the vital sheath of the *puruṣa*. According to the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* there are five selves, *ātman* in the form of *puruṣa*, *puruṣa-vidhaḥ*, which constitute the manifestation of the Divine in the individual frame (TaitUp 2.): *annamaya* (material), *prāṇamaya* (vital), *manomaya* (mental), *vijñānamaya* (supramental), *ānandamaya* (transcendental, blissful) *puruṣa*.

prāṇāyāma, 'breath-exercise'; there are three major breaths on which *prāṇāyāma* is built: *pūraka* (breathing in), *recaka* (breathing out), *kumbhaka* (holding).

prapañca, lit. 'spreading forward'; from root *pañc*, 'to expand'; expansion, development, manifestation; phenomenon; (in philosophy) the expansion of the universe, the visible world.

pratibimba, a reflection, reflected image, mirrored form; a resemblance or counterpart of real forms, a picture, image, shadow.

pratyāhāra, lit. 'withdrawing'; in Yoga 'withdrawing of the senses (*indriya*)' from the object of sense (*artha*). It is the sixth stage of Patañjali Yogasūtras (see '*niyama*').

pravṛtti, lit. 'rolling forward'; moving onwards, advance, progress; coming forth, appearance, manifestation; rise, source, origin.

prayatna, effort, endeavour, activity, action.

prema, love, affection, kindness.

preta, lit. 'gone', dead.

preta-loka, lit. 'the world of the dead'.

preyas, lit. 'more loved', more desired; desirable.

pṛthivī, earth.

punarjanma, lit. 're-birth'.

puṇya, moral or religious merit.

purāṇa, lit. 'ancient'; N. of a class of sacred works. 18 major *Purāṇas* are grouped in 3 divisions: 1) Brahmā of the *Brahma*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Brahmavaivarta*, *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Bhaviṣya*, and *Vāmana Purāṇā*; 2) Viṣṇu of the *Viṣṇu*, *Bhāgavata*, *Nāradīya*, *Garuḍa*, *Padma*, and *Varāha Purāṇa*; 3) Śiva of the *Śiva*, *Liṅga*, *Skanda*, *Agni* or in place of it the *Vāyu*, *Matsya*, and *Kūrma Purāṇa*.

puruṣa, a man, a principle of man, a person; in the *Vedas* the transcendental or universal Man, embodying all the faculties of Consciousness, who was sacrificed (RV 10.91) or whose faculties were sacrificed (AitUp 1-2) projecting the universal Consciousness in the terms of faculties of consciousness into manifestation and thus evoking the evolution of individual being; in Sāṁkhya the principle of the Soul, a witness whose engagment with *prakṛti* creates the Universe.

puruṣārtha, lit. 'an object of human pursuit'; pl., the four aims of existence: *kāma*, the gratification of desire; *artha*, acquirement of wealth; *dharma*, discharge of duty; *mokṣa*, liberation or final emancipation (Mn etc.).

puruṣottama, lit. 'the highest *Puruṣa*', the supreme Person, Soul, transcendental to the transcendental, as it were, who oversees and rules over both *vyakta* and *avyakta*, *kṣara* and *akṣara*, *vidyā* and *avidyā*, who is simultaneously transcendental, universal and individual and greater than all of them.

rāga, lit. 'colour'; red colour, redness; any feeling or passion, (esp.) love, affection; a musical note, harmony, melody. In the later system a particular musical mode; Bharata speaks of 6 *rāgas*: *bhairava*, *kauśika*, *hindola*, *dīpaka*, *śrī-rāga*, and *megha*; other writers give other names, sometimes 7 or 26 *rāgas* are mentioned.

rahasya, lit. 'secret', a secret doctrine or mystery; an esoteric teaching.

rāhu, lit. 'a seizer'; N. of a *daitya* or demon who seizes the sun and moon and thus causes eclipses.

rajāṃsi, airy spaces or vital spaces, in the *Veda trīṇi rajāṃsi*, three vital regions are mentioned.

rajas, 'coloured or dim space', the sphere of vapour or mist, region of clouds, space; in the *Veda* the lower and higher atmospheres; sometimes also three vital spaces; (in phil.) the second of the three *guṇas* or qualities (see also '*sattva*', and '*tamas*'); sometimes identified with *tejas*.

rājasika, of the quality of *rajas guṇa*, energetic, full of passion etc.

rājasūya, 'ceremony of coronation'.

rājayoga, lit. 'the King Yoga'.

rāmāyaṇa, great epic poem of Vālmīki about Rāma and Sītā; it contains about 24000 verses.

rasa, lit. 'essence', a juice, a marrow, a liquid; taste, flavour, there are 6 original tastes — *madhura*, sweet, *amla*, sour, *lavaṇa*, salt, *kaṭuka*, pungent, *tikta*, bitter, *kaṣāya*, astringent. In Rhet. the taste or character of a work, the feeling or sentiment prevailing in it, *śṛṅgāra*, love, *vīra*, heroism, *bībhatsa*, disgust, *raudra*, anger or fury, *hāsya*, mirth, *bhayānaka*, terror, *karuṇa*, pity, *adbhuta*, wonder, *śānta*, tranquillity or contentment, *vātsalya*, paternal fondness.

rasa-bhāva, the feeling of *rasa* (see '*rasa*').

rati, lit. 'rest' from root *ram*, 'to rest, to calm'; repose; pleasure, enjoyment, delight; the pleasure of love, sexual passion or union, amorous enjoyment; one of the two wives of Kāma-deva, together with Prīti.

raudra, lit. 'belonging to Rudra', 'having Rudra's qualities'.

ṛg, from *ṛc*, the sacred word or hymn of the *Ṛg Veda*.

rocanā, lit. 'the shining ones'; there are three shining worlds of Svar world, known in the terminology of Sri Aurobindo as Overmental Gnosis, Overmind and Intuition, which

constitute the link between the Supermind and the lower hemisphere. The three heavens of the mental consciousness are the highest layers of the lower hemisphere, *tisro dyāvaḥ*; in Sri Aurobindo's language these heavens are the Illumined Mind, Higher Mind and Mind proper.

rodasī, lit. 'two shining ones', usually applied to *dyāvāpṛthivī*, heaven and earth.

ṛṣi, a seer, an inspired poet, a composer of the *Vedic* hymns. There are two kinds mentioned in the *Veda*: *pūrva ṛṣayaḥ*, the first *ṛṣis* and *nūtanāḥ*, the modern ones. In the *Brāhmaṇas* seven *ṛṣis* are often mentioned; according to ŚBr xiv, 5, 2, 6, these are: Gotama, Bharadvāja, Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Vasiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, and Atri. In astronomy the seven *ṛṣis* constitute the Great Bear constellation. For each *manvantara* there is a different set of seven *ṛṣis* who bring the *Veda* into action within the human consciousness.

ṛta, the dynamic Truth, divine law, divine truth in its dynamism, manifesting the world. The concept of the dynamic truth, *ṛtam*, was lost in the post-*Vedic* literature and only the static truth, *satyam*, remained. All what was related to the action of *ṛtam* was seen only in the context of illusion, *māyā*, and thus lost its true value, and manifestation of the Divine was thus regarded impossible and unnecessary. The aim of life changed from manifesting the Divine to escaping from his manifestation and dissolving oneself in his static truth, *satyam*.

ruci, light, lustre, splendour, beauty.

rudra, lit. 'roarer', by some 'the shining one'; N. of the father and ruler of the Rudras and Maruts in the *Veda*; he is closely connected with Indra and still more with Agni; he has also the epithet Śiva, 'benevolent', which later replaced the name of Rudra.

rūpa, a form, shape, figure; in the *Brāhmaṇas* it is mentioned together with *nāman*, 'name', as two major means for manifesting *Brahman*, (ŚBr). It represents the visual faculty of consciousness whereas *nāman*, its auditory faculty of knowledge.

saccidānanda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss; the transcendental Divine.

sadānanda, perpetual bliss, N. of Śiva.

sādhaka, effective, efficient, accomplishing, fulfilling, completing, perfecting, finishing; an efficient or skilful person, an adept, magician; the follower on the path of *yoga*.

sādhanā, means of realising the goal, a discipline of *yoga*.

sādhāraṇīkaraṇa, making equal.

sādhusaṅga, 'communion with *sādhus*'.

saguṇa, lit. 'with qualities', as in opposition to *nirguṇa*, 'without qualities'.

sahasradala, lit. 'thousand-petalled' lotus; the *cakra* at the top of the head; the seat of Śiva in Tantra, where Śiva and Śakti meet and become one.

sahasrāra, see '*sahasradala*'.

sahṛdaya, lit. 'with the heart', sincere etc.

sākṣī, lit. 'with an eye', a witness; in phil. 'subject'; *puruṣa*, unborn soul, witnessing silently the actions of *prakṛti*.

sākṣibhāva, the state of witness.

śākta, belonging to the tradition of Śāktas; relating to power or energy, or worshipping the *śakti* or divine energy, especially as identified with Durgā, wife of Śiva.

śakti, lit. 'force, power, ability', from root *śak*, 'to be able to'; the power of the Divine, known as Mahāśakti, in the post-*Vedic* tradition known in her four aspects: Maheśvarī, Mahākālī, Mahālakṣmī, Mahāsarasvatī, representing Knowledge, Power, Beatitude and Perfection, respectively (SA).

śaktipatha, an initiation into the sacred power of *guru*.

śākya-muni, N. of Buddha.

samādhi, lit. 'becoming one with', union with, completion; concentration of the thoughts, intense absorption or a kind of trance; profound meditation, intense contemplation of any particular object (so as to identify the contemplator with the object meditated upon); this is the eighth and last stage of Yoga; (in Buddhism) the fourth and last stage of *dhyāna*.

sāmājika, social, related to the social gathering etc.

samaṣṭi, collectiveness.

samatā, equality, equanimity etc.

samatva, see '*samatā*'.

sambandha, lit. 'binding together'; association, relation, relative, friend etc.

saṃjñā, lit. 'knowledge in complete agreement with all possible views';

consciousness, clear knowledge, understanding, conception (ŚBr etc.).

saṃjñāna, see '*samjñā*'; 'the essential sense' (SA) (see '*prajñāna*').

sāṁkhya, N. of a philosophical system, ascribed to the sage Kapila, meaning lit. 'enumerating' the major essential categories or twenty-five *tattvas* (twenty-three of them evolved out of *prakṛti*, 'the first-producer', these are *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas*, the five *tan-mātras*, the five *karmendriyas*, the five *jñānendriyas*, the five *mahā-bhūtas*; the twenty-fifth is the *puruṣa*, spirit or soul, which is neither a producer nor production); there are many *puruṣas* and one *prakṛti*; each separate *puruṣa* causes by its union with *prakṛti* a separate creation out of *prakṛti*; the object of this philosophy is to effect the final liberation of the *puruṣa* from the bondage caused by that creation. The Yoga branch of the Sāṁkhya recognizes a supreme spirit, the universal *puruṣa*, dominating each individual *puruṣa*. The Tantras identify *prakṛti* with the wives of the gods, esp. with the wife of Śiva.

sāṁkhya-yoga, *yogic* practice based on the Sāṁkhya philosophy, *yoga* of Sāṁkhya.

samparka, association, union etc.

saṃsāra, a course, passage, passing through a succession of states, the world, secular life.

saṃśaya, doubt; in Nyāya, doubt about the point to be discussed; difficulty etc.

saṁskāra, lit. 'putting together' or 'making perfect', accomplishment etc.; a sacred or sanctifying ceremony; faculty of memory, mental impression or recollection; impression on the mind of acts done in a former state of existence (one of the 24 qualities of the Vaiśeṣikas); (pl., in Buddhism) a mental conformation or creation of the mind (such as that of the external world).

saṁyoga, lit. 'uniting together', union, conjunction, connection etc.

sañcāribhāva, a transitory feeling.

saṅga, 'coming together', community, association etc.

śaṅkara, lit. 'making peace' or 'causing prosperity', beneficent; N. of Śiva; N. of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya (788 and 820 A.D.), the founder of Advaita Vedānta philosophy.

sannyāsa, lit. 'dropping totally off', resignation, renunciation of the world; the fourth *āśrama* in the life of a *brāhmaṇa*.

sansārin, the one who is in *sansāra*, in the worldly life.

śānti, peace.

santoṣa, 'happiness', total satisfaction.

saramā, a hound of heaven. In the *Veda* she is the hunting dog of Indra and other gods, symbolising the intuitive movement of consciousness towards the Truth (SA).

sarasvatī, lit. 'who possesses the stream'; N. of a river; the river-goddess who in the *Vedas* has seven sisters and is herself sevenfold; in the *Brāhmaṇas* she is identified with *vāc*, 'speech'; N. of the goddess of eloquence and learning in the post-*Vedic* period; truth-audition, inspiration, the divine word (SA).

śarīra, body, physical body.

śāstra, instruction, rule, order, a manual, a treatise, a book of knowledge etc.

sattva, lit. 'the quality of that which is'; true existence, the highest of the three *guṇas*, qualities, of *prakṛti*, that of purity and knowledge (see '*rajas*' and '*tamas*').

satya, truth; 'that which is'; in the *Veda* distinguished from *ṛta*, the dynamic truth.

savitṛ, lit. 'the impeller', from root *su/sū*, 'to press upon, to push on, to compel', or 'to create' etc.; in the *Veda* the god of the Sun, the Divine in Manifestation, who represents all the godheads in their rising movement towards the Truth.

siddha, lit. 'realised', 'whose goal is achieved'; semidivine being of great purity and perfection who possesses the eight supernatural faculties, *siddhis*; they inhabit, together with the *munis*, the *bhuvar-loka*, the space between heaven and earth; in the later literature they are regarded as *sādhyas*.

siddhis, accomplishment, fulfilment, complete attainment; there are eight *siddhis* usually mentioned, given in the following *śloka*: *aṇimā laghimā prāptiḥ prākāmyam mahimā tathā īśitvaṃ ca vaśitvaṃ ca tathā kāmāvasāyitā*; sometimes 26 are added, e.g., *dūra-śravaṇa*, *sarvajña-tva*, *agni-stambha* etc., (Sāṁkhyak, Tattvas, Sarvad).

śilpa, any manual art or craft, any handicraft or mechanical or fine art (64 such arts or crafts, sometimes called *bāhya-kalā*, 'external or practical arts', such as carpentery, architecture, jewellery, farriery, acting, dancing, music, medicine, poetry etc.;

and 64 *abhyantara-kalā*, 'secret arts', e.g., kissing, embracing, and various other arts of coquetry) (Mn. MBh. etc.).

śloka, a verse in *anuṣṭubh* meter, probably from root *śru*, 'to hear'; Vālmīki seeing the death of a bird in the forest, experiencing deep grief and compassion, composed the first *śloka*.

smaraṇa, memorizing, remembering, recollecting; mental recitation, remembering the name of God.

smita, smiled, smiling or smile.

smṛti, memory, the whole tradition which was handed down by composing and memorizing the text, in opposition to *śruti*, a direct revelation of the inspired Word, which was not composed but 'heard' by a deeper listening of the soul.

śoka, lit. 'burning', from root *śuc*, 'to burn'; flame, glow, heat; sorrow, affliction, anguish, pain, trouble, grief etc.

śrāddha, a ceremony for the benefit of one's *pitṛs*, ancestors and forefathers, offering them balls of rice called *piṇḍa*; it is supposed to supply them with strengthening nourishment; for best results it is to be performed by a son.

śraddhā, lit. 'holding one's heart'; having faith, believing; faith, belief, trust etc.

śrama, austerity, labour, toil, exercise, hard work of any kind whether mental or physical.

śravaṇa, lit. 'hearing', from root *śru*, to hear; learning, study etc.

śreyas, lit. 'better', 'more splendid', from *śrī*; in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* it is used as a concept of the ultimate good, in opposition to *preyas*, which is 'more desirable', so that one can choose the path between what is 'liked or desired' and what is 'better or best', respectively.

śrī, probably from *śrī* 'diffusing light or radiance'; light, lustre, radiance, splendour, glory, beauty, grace, loveliness; wealth etc.; the N. of Lakṣmī the wife of Viṣṇu.

śṛṅgāra, the *rasa* of love and affection.

śruti, the body of the *Vedic* canon, the literature which was not composed by men (*apauruṣeya*) but revealed to his inner hearing (*śruta*), consists of *Saṃhitā*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka*, *Upaniṣad* in different branches (*śākhā*).

stambha, pillar, column etc.

sthāyibhāva, a feeling or a state of steadiness.

sthāyin, stable, steady etc.

sthitaprajña, lit. 'whose wisdom is steady'.

sthiti, 'state', see '*sthāna*'.

subhadrā, supremely glorious or splendid; N. of the younger sister of Kṛṣṇa and wife of Arjuna.

subhāṣita, lit. 'well spoken', a proverb.

śuddhi, lit. 'purity', cleanliness, purification etc.

sukha, lit. 'good space', from *su-kha*; happiness, well-being; in opposition to *duḥ-kha*, 'bad space', as suffering, grief, unhappiness, sorrow etc.

sukha-duḥkha, happiness and unhappiness; the *yogin* is to be equal to both according to the *Gītā*.

sūkta, lit. 'well-said', *su-ukta*; perfectly said, *Vedic* hymn.

sundaram, beautiful, wonderful etc.

śūnyatā, lit. 'emptiness', void, nothingness etc.

śūnyavāda, the doctrine of nothingness.

supta, 'asleep', ppp. from *svap*, 'to sleep'; sleeping etc.

sura-loka, the world of the gods.

sūrya, the sun; the Sun god in the *Veda*, symbolizing according to SA the supramental consciousness force.

śuṣṇa, N. of a demon, who was born after the destruction of Vṛtra by Indra.

suṣupti, 'a state of deep sleep without dreams'.

sūtra, 'a thread', a cord, a string, which connects or holds many beads; a short sentence or aphoristic rule; major works of *smṛti* literature were composed in this style; we have *śrauta-sūtras*, *gṛhya-sūtras*, *dharma-sūtras* etc.

svabhāva, lit. 'one's own nature'; according to the nature of the individual soul.

svadharma, lit. 'one's own law or way of action'; according to the law supported by one's *svabhāva*.

svādhyāya, lit. 'reading for oneself'; a technique of reading the scripture for oneself in order to realize its deeper significance.

svapna, dream, a 'sleeping state with dreams' as in opposition to *suṣupti*, 'a state of deep sleep without dreams'.

svar, the sun, sunshine, light, lustre; bright space created by the rays of the Sun; sky, heaven as distinguished from *div*; there are three luminous regions of *svar* in the *Veda*: *trī rocanā*. It is distinguished as a

higher region from *div*, which is also triple, *tisro dyāvaḥ*. *Svar* is linking the Sun with the lower hemisphere, bringing the dynamic truth, *ṛtam*, into the manifestation. In the later tradition this region becomes regarded as a region of *māyā*, an illusion, and as such loses its creative aspect, becoming unimportant. The Sun itself becomes a part of the lower hemisphere and heaven, *div*, takes a higher position than the Sun, thus the Supramental region disappears altogether from the memory of post-*Vedic* tradition.

svarāj, lit. 'self-ruling', 'self-shining'; the King, the sovereign etc.

svarga, lit. 'going to *svar*'; 'heaven' (see '*svar*').

tamas, lit. 'darkness'; mental darkness or ignorance; one of the three modes of *prakṛti* constituting inertia and dullness in the being.

tāmasika, 'that of the *tamas* quality', dull, ignorant, inert etc.

tantra, lit. 'the principal or essential part', characteristic feature, model, type, system, framework; a class of works which presents the *Vedic* knowledge in the *kali yuga*. There are three kinds of Tantra: Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Śākta.

tattva, lit. 'that-ness'; the essential quality; a true principle; truth etc.; in Sāṁkhya there are 25 *tattvas*: a-*vyakta*, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas*, the 5 *tan-mātras*, the 5 *mahā-bhūtas*, the 10 organs of action and perception, and *puruṣa*.

theravāda, N. of a Buddhist school.

titikṣā, endurance, patience.

trāsa, fear, terror.

turīya, the fourth state of spirit; pure impersonal Spirit.

tyāga, leaving, abandoning; giving up, resigning; sacrificing one's life; the state of inner liberation from the bonds of nature, the inner *sannyāsa*.

uddīpana, lit. 'lighting up'; inflaming, exciting, illuminating.

unmāda, mad, insane.

upaniṣad, lit. 'sitting down close to'; the sacred texts which are a part of *Brāhmaṇa* literature.

upāya, lit. 'coming near', 'approaching'; 'that by which one reaches one's aim', a means, way, craft.

uṣas, dawn, morning light; in the *Vedas* the sister of Ādityas and the twin sister of Naktā, Night; also daughter of Heaven, Dyaus. She is the beloved wife of the Sun, Sūrya, who follows her path to the lower hemisphere, where he realizes all his desires with her. She is the symbol of spiritual illumination of consciousness.

usrā, morning light, personified as a red cow or a bull; a ray of light.

utsāha, effort, resolution; perseverance.

uttara, lit. 'higher'.

vācika, verbal; caused by words, wordy.

vaidika, lit. 'of the *Veda*', *Vedic*.

vairāgya, lit. 'loss of colour'; disgust, distaste for; freedom from all worldly desires, asceticism.

vaiśeṣika, philosophical doctrine by Kaṇāda about the distinct nature of the nine substances: air, fire, water, earth, mind, ether, time, space, and soul, of which the first five, including mind, are held to be atomic.

Viṣṇu', a worshipper of Viṣṇu.

vaiśya, lit. 'belonging to people, *viś*', one of the *varṇas* of traders and agriculturists.

vajrayāna, lit. 'the diamond path' in Buddhism.

vala, lit. 'enclosure', a cave; in the *Veda* a brother of Vṛtra conquered by Indra.

varṇa, lit. 'colour'; four *varṇas* are recognized in the *Vedic* society as *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*; in linguistics 'letters' of the alphabet.

varuṇa, lit. 'covering', 'enveloping'; all enveloping sky (cp. Uranus in Greek mythology); one of the greatest Ādityas, symbolizing the manifestation of infinite Existence, later known as *Sat* (SA).

vāryam, lit. 'desirable', 'most wanted'.

vāsana, lit. 'clothing', 'dress'; or from Caus. of *vas*, 'causing to dwell'.

vasu, lit. 'bright'; wealth, goods, riches, property (RV etc.); N. of the gods, esp. of the Ādityas, Maruts, Aśvins, Indra, Uṣas, Rudra, Vāyu, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Kubera (RV, AV, MBh, Rm); N. of a class of gods, whose number is usually eight, and whose chief is Indra, later Agni and Viṣṇu; the names of the Vasus, according to the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, are: Āpa, 'Waters', Dhruva, 'the Pole-star', Soma, 'the Moon', Dhava or Dhara, 'Earth', Anila, 'Wind', Anala or Pāvaka, 'Fire', Pratyuṣa,

'the Dawn', Prabhāsa, 'Light'.

vasu-gaṇa, see '*vasu*'.

vāyu, wind; the second element in *pañca mahābhūtāni*, five great elements; in the *Veda* 'the god of wind', often associated with Indra; in post-*Vedic* literature is considered to be the essence of *antarikṣa*, the space between heaven and earth, as Āditya is the essence of *dyauḥ*, and Agni is the essence of *pṛthivī*; the union of Agni, Vāyu and Āditya is considered the aim of the *Vedic* Sacrifice.

vedanā, lit. 'letting know' or 'announcing'; perception; pain.

vedānta, lit. 'the end of *Veda*'; *Upaniṣads*; there are different interpretations of Vedānta: Advaita, Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita.

vibhāva, any condition which excites or develops a particular state of mind or body; any cause of emotion occurring in the persons and circumstances represented in a drama, as opp. to the *anu-bhāva* or external signs or effects of emotion.

vibhūta, ppp. from *vi-bhū*, to become all-pervasive etc.; mighty, everpresent.

vicetas, lit. 'conscious in detail'; discerning, clearly perceiving, discriminating. In the *Veda* it is a term for the faculty of *vijñāna* (SA).

vidyā, knowledge; as in opposition to *avidyā*, ignorance or partial knowledge; knowledge of phenomena in time and space; *vidyā* and *avidyā*, according to the *Īśopaniṣad*, are both necessary for the realisation of the Supreme Consciousness.

vijñāna, lit. 'knowing or realising oneself in detail'; in the TaitUp it is indicating the Supramental Consciousness (SA). See also '*prajñāna*'.

vikalpa, variation, difference in perception, doubt.

vikāra, alteration, distortion, modification, transformation. In Sāṁkhya *vikāras* are derived from *prakṛti*; there are 7 *vikāras*: *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, and the 5 *tan-mātras*, these are also producers; from them come the 16 *vikāras* which are only productions: the 5 *mahā-bhūtāni*, 5 *buddhīndriyāṇi*, the 5 *karmendriyāṇi*, and *manas*.

vinaya, lit. 'leading away' or 'separating'; leading, guidance, training, education, discipline, control; in Buddhism the rules of discipline for monks; decency, modesty.

vipassana, (Pali) lit. 'seeing clear'; Buddhist technique of meditation.

vīra, a hero; strong, powerful.

virāṭ, lit. 'shining out', 'ruling far', from *virāj*; N. of a king or queen.

viṣāda, depression, despair, disgust, fear, dullness.

viśiṣṭādvaita, philosophical doctrine of Vedānta by Rāmānuja (12th century AD), lit. 'specified non-duality', where the souls of men have and preserve their own unique identity in the *Brahman*, in opposition to Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, where the souls of men lose their separate identity in *Brahman*, like the drop of water in the ocean.

viṣṇu, lit. '*vi-ṣnu*, who broadens the oneness'; in the *Veda* the godhead of vastness, Overmental Consciousness, the younger brother of Indra, who is the godhead of the Divine Mind (SA). In the post-*Vedic* literature is described as having 10 *avatāras*, becomes one of the major gods of Hinduism.

viśvarūpa, lit. 'the universal form'; in the *Gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa reveals his universal form to Arjuna, his Viṣṇu's identity, as the godhead of vastness of the Overmind (see 'Viṣṇu').

viśve-devās, lit. 'all the gods collectively'; a class of gods; according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and other texts they are the sons of Viśvā, daughter of Dakṣa (RV etc.).

vitarka, lit. 'guess', 'supposition'; reasoning etc.

vivasvat, lit. 'with the light shining forth'; N. of the Sun, Āditya; in the *Veda* the eighth son of Aditi.

viveka, lit. 'discrimination', distinction; in Vedānta the power of separating the invisible Spirit from the visible world (or spirit from matter, truth from untruth, reality from mere semblance or illusion).

viyoga, lit. 'dis-union', separation.

vṛka, lit. 'tearer', a wolf; in the *Veda* symbolises the adversary force against the spiritual advance of man.

vṛtra, lit. 'obstructer', restrainer, coverer etc.; in the *Veda* the main adversary, preventing the flow of heavenly waters of purity and inspiration; killed by Indra.

vṛtti, lit. 'rolling', 'that which is repeating itself'; conduct, behaviour, character, practice etc.

vyādhi, lit. 'sickness', from root *vyadh*, 'to be pierced'.

vyakti-viṣaya, *vyakti*, lit. 'appearance', distinctness, individuality; *viṣaya* lit. 'extention', sphere, scope etc.

vyaktiviveka, lit. 'discrimination of distinct features'.

vyāsa, N. of a legendary *ṛṣi*, the composer of *Mahābhārata* and a compiler of the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*.

yajña, sacrifice, lit. 'the conscious act of advancing towards more conscious manifestation'; 'manifesting the Spirit in a conscious way'; 'bringing the powers of light into the darkness'; 'offering the powers of darkness to the Light for transformation'.

yajur, lit. 'the sacrificial formula' which makes sacrifice possible; the verses constituting *Yajurveda*.

yama, lit. 'restrain', (see '*niyama*'); In the *Veda* he is one of the Aṅgirasa *ṛṣis*; the first of men who was born from Vivasvat, the god of the Sun, and his wife Saraṇyū; in Post-*vedic* mythology he becomes the lord of Death, judging and punishing people for their deeds after death, whereas in the *Veda* he is the saviour of the soul in the time of death rather than the Death incarnate.

yoga, (fr. *yuj*) the act of yoking, joining, uniting (RV, MBh); an abstract contemplation, meditation, (esp.) self-concentration; practised as a system taught by Patañjali and called *yoga darśana*, it is the second of the two Sāṁkhya systems, its aim is to teach the means by which the human spirit may attain complete union with Īśvara; in the practice of self-concentration it is closely connected with Buddhism (Up, MBh, Kāv etc.). In Sāṁkhya it means the union of soul with matter (one of the 10 *mūlikārthās* or radical facts, *tattvas*); with Jainas, contact or mixing with the outer world; in astronomy, conjunction, lucky conjuncture (MBh etc.). There are many kinds of *yoga*. *Karmayoga, bhaktiyoga, jñānayoga* are dealt with in detail in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. There are also other kinds of *yoga*: *dhyāna-yoga*, *rājayoga*, *haṭhayoga*, *kriyāyoga*, *pūrṇayoga* etc. Patañjali defines *yoga* in the *Yogasūtra* as ceasing the activities of *citta*: *yogaś-citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*, which can be translated as: 'yoga is a cessation of the habitual movements of consciousness.' Generally speaking, any practice which leads the practitioner eventually to union with the Divine can be called *yoga*.

yogārūḍha, lit. 'who has climbed to the top of *yoga*'; a realised being.

yoga-sādhanā, lit. 'the discipline of *yoga*'.

yoga-sūtra, N. of a work by Patañjali (2nd cent. BC).

yogī, lit. 'one who practices *yoga*'.

Abbreviations of source-texts used in the Glossary

AitĀr	Aitareya-Āraṇyakam
AitBr	Aitareya-Brāhmaṇam
AitUp	Aitareya-Upaniṣad
ĀśvŚr	Āśvalāyana Śrauta-sūtra
AV	Atharva-veda Saṁhitā
BṛhUp	Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad
BhP	Bhāgavata Purāṇa
BhG	Bhagavad-Gītā
Buddh	Buddhist
ChaUp	Chandogya-Upaniṣad
Gṛ	Gṛhya-sūtra
ĪśUp	Īśā-Upaniṣad
JaiUpBr	Jaiminīya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa
Hariv	Harivaṃśa
KaṭhUp	Kaṭha-Upaniṣad
KātyŚr	Kātyāyana Śrauta-sūtra
KauṣBr	Kauṣitakī-Brāhmaṇam
KauṣUp	Kauṣitakī-Upaniṣad
KeUp	Kena-Upaniṣad
MaitrS	Maitrayaṇī Saṁhitā
Mn	Manu Smṛti
MāṇḍUp	Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad
MuṇḍUp	Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad
MaitUp	Maitrī-Upaniṣad
MBh	Mahābharata-yuddham
Nir	Niruktam
Pāṇ	Pāṇini
PraUp	Praśna-Upaniṣad
Rm	Rāmāyaṇam
RV	Ṛig-veda Saṁhitā
ŚBr	Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇam
Sarvad	Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha
Sāy	Sāyaṇa
SA	Sri Aurobindo
Sāṁkhyak	Sāṁkhyakārika
ŚvetUp	Śvetāśvatarā-Upaniṣad
Suśr	Suśrutasaṃhitā
TaitĀr	Taittirīya-Āraṇyakam
TaitBr	Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇam
TaitUp	Taittirīya-Upaniṣad
TS	Taittirīya Saṁhitā
Tattvas	Tattvasamāsa
Up	Upaniṣads
VS	Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā
VP	Vākyapadīya
Vedāntas	Vedāntasāra

Other abreviations used in the Glossary

Abl.	Ablative case
Acc.	Accusative case
aor.	aorist
Caus.	Causative
cent.	century
cp.	compare
Dat.	Dative case
Desir.	Desirative
du.	Dual
esp.	especially
Freq.	Frequentative
f.	feminine gender
fr.	from root
fut.	Future Tense
Gen.	Genitive case
ger.	Gerundive
gram.	Grammar
incl.	including
inf.	Infinitive
inj.	injunctive
imperf.	Imperfect (Past Tense)
Imp.	Imperative Mood
Inst.	Instrumental case
ling.	linguistics
lit.	literally
Loc.	Locative case
m.	masculine gender
n.	neutral gender
N.	name
Nom.	Nominative case
opp.	opposite
Opt.	Optative Mood
perf.	perfect
phil.	philosophy
pl.	plural
ppp.	Participle Perfect Passive (Participle II in English)
pres.	Present Tense
Rhet.	Rhetoric
sg.	singular
subj.	subjunctiv

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